

**STIRRING THE POT:**  
**TOWARDS A CRITICAL SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE PEDAGOGY OF**  
**HOME ECONOMICS**

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For the Degree of Master of Education  
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By

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## **ABSTRACT**

Home economics seeks to improve the well-being of individuals, families, and communities. Having evolved to meet the changing needs of society, home economics internationally and nationally has shifted to address issues of sustainability. The extent to which this is true of Saskatchewan home economists is questionable. Climate change is the most pressing issue facing the citizens of today because human industrial processes are threatening the extinction of civilization, most species, and the planet itself (Bush & Lemmen, 2019; Foster, 2010; International Governmental Panel on Climate Change, 2019; United Nations, 2019; World Health Organization, 2016, and 2019). Environmental threats become issues of social justice when climate risks threaten the well-being of members of society: particularly the most vulnerable.

Home economics can contribute to improving the well-being of individuals, families, and communities by developing students as engaged citizens who can critically analyse the status quo and bring about positive change through social and political action. Using historical analysis through a critical feminist lens, a theoretical framework for a critical social and ecological pedagogy of home economics is established. Building on Smith's (2017a) home economics pedagogical braid model, the work of Kumashiro's (2015) anti-oppressive education, Westheimer's (2015) citizenship education, and eco-justice models from Bowers (2002), and Edmundson and Martusewicz (2013), I illuminate one such pathway to help home economics education reach its full potential to improve the well-being of individuals, families, and communities.

A critical social and ecological pedagogy of home economics requires provincial curricula renewal that includes the participation of home economics specialists grounded in current home economics research. Higher order thinking outcomes based on Bloom's

Taxonomy (Bloom, Englehart, Furst, Hill, & Krathwohl, 1956) are needed in updated provincial curricula. This research recommends that careful thought must be given to ensure critical social and ecological pedagogies of home economics are employed to revitalize the home economics certificate program at the University of Saskatchewan. The voices of home economists should be heard in places where decisions are made about home economics and must be advocated for by provincial home economics professional associations to ensure the continued legacy of home economics in the province.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AHEA	Alberta Human Ecology and Home Economics Association
ASHE	Association of Saskatchewan Home Economists
IFHE	International Federation for Home Economics
IPCC	International Governmental Panel on Climate Change
MAHE	Manitoba Association of Home Economists
NGO	Non-government organization
OHEA	Ontario Home Economics Association
PHEc	Professional Home Economist
SDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Goal
SHETA	Saskatchewan Home Economics Teachers Association
SIEC	Saskatoon Industry Education Council
STF	Saskatchewan Teachers Federation
UBC	University of British Columbia
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational and Scientific and Cultural Organization
U of S	University of Saskatchewan
UskUASC	University of Saskatchewan, University Archives & Special Collections
WHO	World Health Organization
WI	Women's Institute

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT**

#### **Introduction**

Home economics education in Saskatchewan is at a pivotal juncture for the evolution of the profession: provincial curriculum renewal and the recent restructuring of the home economics teacher education program at the University of Saskatchewan (U of S) offer opportunities for the discipline to maximize student engagement, while simultaneously equipping students with the means to participate as active members in civil society to address issues of social and ecological justice. Home economics education in Saskatchewan has the potential to teach to issues of social and ecological justice and currently does not. Developed in the 1990s, both the curriculum and the Home Economics Teacher Education Program (developed when the College of Home Economics was disbanded) are oriented to industry.

For example, members of Saskatchewan Polytechnic (formerly Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, a technical skills-based post-secondary college), participated in home economics curricula committees which developed modules providing background preparation to develop skilled workers for careers in tourism, hospitality, and entrepreneurship. Specifically, modules contain skills-based curricular objectives reflecting technical knowledge required for careers in foods studies, clothing, textiles and fashion, interior design, housing, life transitions, and upholstery. While the skills-based home economics curriculum teacher education program was successful in preparing teachers to teach the curricula of the time, much has changed with regards to the interests of learners, the learning environment, and issues of importance within academia, schools, and society. These changes necessitate the development of new curricula reflective of current trends in home economics, as well as amendments to the

home economics teacher education program to best support them to offer educational opportunities appropriate to individual teaching positions and communities.

Issues of social justice and ecological sustainability have emerged as priorities within academies of higher learning outside of the discipline of home economics as evidenced by alternative discourses developing in resistance to the consumption-driven, industrial production cycle that provides us with the goods we need to live (Foster, 2013). For example, the University of Saskatchewan currently offers a course in food history through the history department and Priscilla Settee offered a course on Indigenous food sovereignty in 2011 (College of Arts and Science, 2015; University of Saskatchewan, 2017). The food history course explores issues of food safety, social justice, sustainability, immigration and “ethnic” cuisine, the rise of the industrial food system, and the gendered nature of cooking through the lens of race, class, gender, region/nation (University of Saskatchewan, 2017). The overlap of topics studied in other disciplines that were once reserved for home economics illustrates the relevancy that home economics education can have to students and society, if it evolves beyond the traditional Saskatchewan approach of technical, skills-based education. Through the reimagining of curriculum, pedagogy, and the delivery of the provincial Home Economics Teacher Education Program, home economics education has the potential to transcend its technical skills-based approach to teaching and learning. Through the development and application of a critical theoretical framework to the curriculum and the teacher education program, home economics can become an agent of change capable of developing students who become citizens able to recognize and work to challenge dominant systems of power, with the aim of creating a socially and ecologically just society. Through a historical analysis that examines the emergence of the discipline in North America and its development in Saskatchewan, situated within contemporary

home economics research, this thesis provides one example of such a critical theoretical framework.

### **Home Economics: Where are we now?**

The larger discipline of home economics is in a period of transition as its purpose shifts, reflecting the evolving needs of society in regards to addressing issues of ecological and social sustainability. Evidence of this shift can be traced to 2015, when the United Nations (n.d.) released a list of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) developed by world leaders at the Paris Climate Change Conference, with the purpose of improving pressing issues of social and ecological justice by the year 2030. The SDGs are part of a sustainability agenda challenging governments, the private sector, and members of civil society to unite in an effort to seek prosperity for people and the planet. The United Nations' (n.d.) SDGs offer many specific targets and indicators broadly summarized through 17 goals including:

- no poverty;
- zero hunger;
- good health and well-being; quality education; gender equality; clean water and sanitation; affordable and clean energy;
- decent work and economic growth [sustainable and inclusive economic growth, work for all];
- industry, innovation, and infrastructure [innovative, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable industrialization];
- reduced inequalities [for individuals facing oppression due to income, age, ability, sex, ethnicity, race, origin, and religion as well as between countries related to representation, migration, and development assistance];
- sustainable cities and communities;
- responsible consumption and production;
- climate action [encouraging urgent action as the effects of climate change caused by pollution generated from production methods that burn fossil fuels which are detrimental to the well-being of vulnerable populations-especially in developing countries];
- life below water [conservation and sustainable use of marine resources];
- life on land [protection, conservation and restoration of terrestrial ecosystems and to combat desertification, land degradation, and loss of biodiversity];
- peace, justice and strong institutions;

- and partnerships for the goals.

Having consultative status with the United Nations, the International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE), as discussed in depth in chapter five, along with support from the Associated Country Women of the World (n.d.) affirmed general support for the SDGs, releasing several position papers explaining the role of home economics in supporting and working towards specific SDGs including ending poverty, promoting good health and well-being, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, and responsible consumption and production. The IFHE and Associated Country Women of the World (n.d.) explain:

Home Economics professionals on all levels — Science, Education, Everyday life and Advocacy - are concerned with the empowerment and well-being of individuals, families, and communities. The ultimate goal of the IFHE is the improvement of the quality of their everyday life including the management of their resources. (par. 1)

Therefore, the pursuit of the UN's SDGs is a pathway towards a just and sustainable future for all, while fulfilling the fundamental goals of the profession.

In a Canadian context, scholars of home economics are also championing a shift from the delivery of home economics with an almost exclusive focus on technical skills in favour of addressing issues of social and ecological justice to work towards improving the lives of individuals, families, and communities (see; Chapman, 2017; Dupuis, 2017; Renwick, 2017; Smith, 2017b; Smith & de Zwart, 2010; Smith & Peterat, 2000; Vaines, 1981). Current scholars of home economics see the pursuit of social and ecological justice as furthering the foundational objective of the profession to improve the lives of individuals, families, and communities by recognizing the complex interactions that occur within and between the social, political, economic, and physical environment, influencing the overall ability to live well (Apple, 2015; Chapman, 2017; Dupuis, 2017; Nickols & Collier, 2015; Renwick, 2017; Smith, 2017b; and Smith & de Zwart, 2010). Therefore, the pursuit of social and ecological justice is inextricably

bound to the aims of home economics as individuals, families, and communities interact with the environment and vice versa as one affects and is affected by the other.

Human activities, particularly a reliance on industrial modes of production and consumption which burn fossil fuels, are creating issues of climate change, altered weather patterns, depletion of fisheries, and degradation of agricultural land. These activities are causing potentially irreversible environmental damage to life-sustaining ecological systems (Dewhurst & Pendergast, 2011; Foster, 2013; North, 2010; Prairie Climate Change Center, n.d.; United Nations, n.d.). Climate change puts vulnerable populations (many of them from developing countries) at risk of not having clean air, safe drinking water, sufficient food and secure shelter, thereby increasing levels of malnutrition, disease, and death (World Health Organization [WHO], 2016). WHO (2016) contends that improving transportation, food, and energy sources to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are important steps to addressing issues of climate change in order to improve health outcomes and quality of life for all people. Thus, issues of social and ecological justice are also issues of import to home economics. However, despite the coalescence of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, the focus of home economics as an international discipline, and the concentration of home economics academia within Canada, not all subsets of the discipline are following suit.

Home economics is a diverse and varied field, often described as transdisciplinary because applications are integrated across a wide gamut of studies spanning the physical and social sciences, health, finance, child development, agriculture, economics, consumer studies, marketing, production, and technology sectors (Nickols & Collier, 2015). Sometimes practitioners of home economics self-identify as home economists, although many doing this work recognize themselves within more narrow contexts of their specialization such as nutritionists, educators, and financial planners (Apple & Coleman, 2003 as cited in Nickols &

Collier, 2015). The expanse of transdisciplinary home economics-related careers has led to variances in the goals, interests, and pursuits of its practitioners. Competing goals, interests and pursuits of practitioners in diverse home economics-related careers has led to the fragmentation of the field, as not all specializations within home economics have maintained close ties with the fundamental goals of the profession at large.

The divisiveness of the discipline was cited as a major contributing factor to the disbandment of the 65-year-old Canadian Home Economics Association (CHEA) in 2003 (Wilson, 2007). Consequently, across provinces, both post-secondary home economics programs and home economics as a school subject have major variations. For example, home economics curricula in Manitoba has been recently renewed and extended to Grades 5 and 6; additions to the 1982 version developed for Grades 7-12 (Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning, 2015). In contrast, in Saskatchewan home economics is merely one of many possible routes to earn the required 50 hours of Practical and Applied Arts taken in Grades 10-12. Other options are industrial arts, photography, computer science, and career and work exploration. Similarly, *home economics education* (the teaching of home economics as a school subject) has developed as a distinct specialization within the larger discipline, warranting a separate professional organization to offer representation, as is the case in Saskatchewan.

In Saskatchewan, the existence of two separate professional associations (the Association of Saskatchewan Home Economists or ASHE, and the Saskatchewan Home Economics Teachers Association or SHETA), illustrates the fragmentation that has occurred within the field through processes of specialization. Apple (2015) argues that the fragmentation of the discipline prevents the development of a cohesive approach to the broad goal of improving the lives of individuals, families, and communities through addressing issues of social and ecological justice. Nickols and Collier (2015) assert that home economists and those related to the profession (self-

identified or not) seem to be pursuing the United Nations (UN) social and ecological sustainable development goals as exemplified by trends of sustainable manufacturing and green practices in textiles, interior design, marketing, and apparel disciplines; sustainable food production in agriculture; and holistic financial planning strategies rooted in home economics family and consumer science models (involving the interplay of people, environment, events, and resources). While this may be true of many home economics-related disciplines, the extent to which this holds true for home economics education in Saskatchewan is questionable.

A developing awareness of the many tensions within the discipline led me down a path of personal reflection and research. I was interested to learn how home economics curricula and pedagogy evolved into what is the present state of home economics in Saskatchewan. I wondered about the historical social, economic, political, and cultural contexts that influenced the development of home economics in Saskatchewan. I also questioned the role that the social, economic, political, and cultural contexts of the development of home economics in Saskatchewan should play towards shaping home economics education in the present. I realized that a historical analysis was necessary to understand the tensions I was experiencing in the present, as I encountered the disconnect between the approach to ecology taken by home economics programs and research outside of Saskatchewan. I was also confronted with the limitations of my discipline's curricula, my personal pedagogical practices and those of colleagues in my home economics professional association, largely graduates of the home economics teacher education program at the U of S. Recognizing discord between the way home economics is taught in Saskatchewan and the way it is conceptualized and practiced outside of the province led me to my research question: How can home economics education in Saskatchewan address issues of social and ecological justice while fulfilling the fundamental goal of the profession to improve the well-being of individuals, families, and communities?



## **My Learning Journey**

Having graduated from the University of Saskatchewan with a Bachelor of Education with teaching areas in home economics and Indigenous studies, I experienced firsthand the privileging of technical skills over higher-order pedagogies<sup>1</sup>. Similar to high school home economics students I currently teach, I too placed a premium on activities in my university home economics classes that were hands-on, seeing them as more authentic and relevant learning opportunities during my time as a teacher candidate. I valued tangible activities and was thirsty for more opportunities to learn by doing. I found myself absorbed in project work periods, losing all sense of time, fully engaged in the processes of learning. I appreciated the sense of pride and accomplishment I felt as I constructed a physical product that could also be appreciated by others in a way I had never experienced while completing coursework in my English, and Indigenous studies university classes. I was interested in home economics education because it presented an alternative to traditional ways of knowing and learning. From perfecting the art of baked meringues, sewing a quilt, or planning a kitchen and expressing my creativity through a visual design display, I saw home economics education as a series of skills to be learned and mastered. Theory portions of labs consisted of the rote memorization and recall of facts which I saw as disconnected from the skills we were learning — I was able to make a divine custard without having memorized the many parts of an egg. I had reduced home economics education to what Apple (2015) calls the clichéd skills of sewing, cooking. It was not until I had a classroom of my own that I began to understand that competence in home economics skills was merely one step along the path to becoming a successful educator.

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<sup>1</sup>Higher order pedagogies are teaching methods related to Bloom's Taxonomy which place different learning methodologies in a hierarchical structure according to the depth of cognition required by learners. Analysis, evaluation, and synthesis require higher levels of critical thinking than learning that requires, recall, comprehension, and applied learning (Bloom, Englehart, Furst, Hill, & Krathwohl, 1956).

Immediately after convocation I was given a classroom of my own where I noticed that students seemed to dislike more traditional classroom activities (mirroring my own experiences in the teacher education program), disengaging on the theory days between labs. Truancy rates were high, tardiness was frequent, assignment completion was inconsistent, as were achievement scores on exams. Classroom discussions, individual conversations, and end-of semester class surveys revealed that students had unmet expectations of our home economics courses. When asked on our end-of semester class survey how students would improve the course, frequent and common answers included ‘cook more’, ‘cook everyday’, ‘more sewing time’, ‘no assignments/projects’. ‘Book work’ or theory seemed dull in comparison to the gratification achieved by producing a tangible product. Citing budgetary restrictions (not enough money to cook everyday) and theory-based curricular requirements to justify my teaching methods, I began to examine Saskatchewan Evergreen Curriculum trying to imagine how I might captivate the attention of my pupils by making theoretical curricular outcomes more meaningful and engaging.

### **A Call for Renewal**

The current Saskatchewan home economics curricula were developed in the late 1990s-early 2000s. Nearly 20 years old, these provincial curricula are being considered for review and renewal as the Ministry of Education assembles a committee to begin the process, overseen by the Ministry of Education (Saskatchewan Teachers Federation, 2017). Certainly, the learning environment and society have changed during the two decades since I was a student with the internet, technology, and cell phones drastically altering the educational landscape, and the way people live their lives in general. Outdated Saskatchewan Evergreen home economics curricula includes modules within foods, clothing and design curricula include: “Meat”; “Keep it cold:

Salads and sandwiches”; “Fashion”; “Accessories”; “Window treatments”; and “Flooring” (see Saskatchewan Education, 2000, 1999a, 1999b). The content is limited to low-order thinking as most curricular outcomes require students to recall, summarize, describe, and classify home economics scientific and technical knowledge as it relates to skills-based information (i.e.: the difference between yeast breads and quick breads; identifying and showing understanding of the elements and principles of design; identifying parts and functions of sewing machines and sergers etc.).

The current Saskatchewan curriculum reinforces lower-order thinking through rote memorization of facts over higher-order, critical thinking, and the development of the new curriculum will likely follow the same trajectory if there is not significant examination and incorporation of research that challenges the status-quo. Instead of inquiry-based curricular outcomes that ask students to examine topics such as food history to understand *how* our food is produced, *how* clothes are produced in developing countries, *how* and *why* women have been oppressed throughout the history of fashion, or *why* fashion features ever-so-slight changes from year to year and *who* benefits, students are currently asked to memorize facts that can be easily looked up on the internet, or in text books, and manuals. Fact-based, memorize-and-recall outcomes do not encourage students to ask how or why questions associated with higher-order thinking because they are based on the acceptance of presented facts as truth without inquiry or critical thinking to uncover how knowledge is based on one’s perspective. For example, out of 30 modules in the Foods Curriculum, only 3 modules show potential to challenge students towards higher-order thinking. Outcome 26.9 in the Foods 10, 30 Curriculum requires that students become a knowledgeable and critical consumer (Saskatchewan Education, 1999). The notes beside the outcome (which outline suggested activities) ask that students express an *opinion* and form a *viewpoint* (Saskatchewan Learning, 1999). While asking students to develop

opinions is an example in the curriculum of higher-order thinking, it is essential to point out that such language is not part of the outcome itself but rather a suggestion that teachers *may* or *may not* use as an approach to fulfilling the objective. Module 27 (“Current Food Issues”), outcomes 27.4 and 27.5 require that students examine world hunger myths and food security (Saskatchewan Education, 1999). Both curricular outcomes *could be* approached to develop higher-order learning but are devoid of requirements to take a stance on controversial issues, and thus remain low-order outcomes (for example, to address higher-order thinking, students need to ask *why* world hunger and food insecurity exist and identify *what* structures of power control them, *who* benefits from the systems driving these issues, and *what* can be done to address root causes.). Aside from the few anomalies that have potential to be taught as higher-order outcomes if approached with intention, a vast majority of outcomes require that students memorize and recall facts. A majority of home economics curricular outcomes are presented as neutral and do not require students to make a judgement, form an opinion, or ask how and why questions that characterize divergent, higher-order thinking. Current home economics curricular outcomes require that students remember what they have been told, rather than thinking for themselves.

### **Another Step in My Learning Journey**

Despite the shortcomings of provincial home economics curricula, I began to develop alternative approaches to teaching the Current Food Issues Module as I explored the growing number of documentaries, books, and articles in popular media exploring topics such as food waste, food security, and food sovereignty. I began to bring my own learning and passion for the subject into my classroom located in a working- and middle-class school with many immigrant families from over fifty countries. Examining the inequalities and unequal distributions of

power, privilege, and wealth, my students and I made connections between our global system of industrialized food production, politics, local and world hunger, and issues of sustainability. Participation in classroom discussion increased, test scores improved, and truancy and tardiness decreased. Parents shared how students were pursuing further learning and talking about our class topics at home. What had once been a detested unit in our senior foods class had become a favorite. Students came to bridge the gap between the theoretical and the practical. Beginning to apply my approach to other home economics subjects, I thought I had cracked the code to the teaching profession. That is until one particular semester I taught a student named Graham (a pseudonym). It seemed that I still had much to learn.

Many staff within our building had deep personal connections with Graham. He was mature, funny, and personable. Graham had a passion for basketball and had been on the school basketball team in grades 9-12. Short a few credits to graduate, Graham decided to earn his diploma by enrolling for one more year at our school. Coaches and Graham's teachers rallied behind our administration, seeking an exemption from provincial high school sports regulations preventing Graham from participating in basketball for a fifth season. While the bid was unsuccessful, it demonstrated the community of people supporting Graham's success. Graham was the eldest of several children. He sometimes missed school to provide childcare as his mom worked towards earning her GED. Growing up in a single-parent household while mom finished school, social assistance rarely provided adequate resources for his family. Graham relied heavily on our school lunch nutrition program, a weekly book club that served breakfast, and my foods classes which he laughingly said he took because he was a hungry, growing, teenager. The day after social assistance was administered was a happy day for Graham as he spent his break in the lab heating up the convenience foods his family had picked up the night before.

While Graham had taken the class to keep his belly full (as many teenagers from lower socioeconomic backgrounds do), he quickly became engaged in learning about the industrial food system. He participated with passion and enthusiasm as we explored the ecological damage caused by animal feedlots as well as the ethical treatment of animals with regards to the way meat is produced in North America.<sup>2</sup> We studied the exploitation of unskilled workers through low wages and poor working conditions and how farmers are losing autonomy as agribusinesses take control of their businesses through the patenting of agricultural chemicals, selective contracts to purchase products for those that subscribe to their methods, and suing those who oppose them. We learned about consumer health and safety concerns as preservatives and chemicals are added to our food with little to no testing (many of which are banned in other countries). At the end of learning about the issues, students were going to do an inquiry project which would allow them to learn more about a specific topic of interest. One day, as the bell rang and class was about to begin, I noticed Graham pacing back and forth across the back of the room. Arms stiff, fists clenched, Graham's anger was obvious. With the eyes of 28 other students on me, I thought it best to give instructions and get the lesson underway, leaving me free to speak one-on-one with Graham in private. First, I asked Graham to take his seat.

Frustrated by the weight of the issues we were studying; Graham had an outburst in front of the class before we could talk in private. He was angry: angry about how we treat animals and people; angry about farmers losing their livelihoods to corporations; angry about the health and safety of his family because of the chemicals used in our food; angry that most solutions from the sources we explored suggested ethical consumerism as a solution to social and ecological ills. Most of all, Graham was angry because the solutions we had discussed were inaccessible to

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<sup>2</sup> Written during a global pandemic, the coronavirus is presenting serious threats to the well-being of individuals, families, and communities as inequalities and lack of infrastructure in health systems are exposed, food security is threatened, and global economies struggle. See Chapter 2 for more context.

himself and the people he loved and wanted to protect. Graham felt powerless. Broken and ashamed when confronted with my own bias and privilege, I realized that I had invited him to the table but hadn't set him a place. Fixing my mistake would take more than exposing Graham to sustainable, accessible solutions such as community gardens, and cooperative local food box programs. While helping to meet his immediate needs, the root causes of Graham's food insecurity would go unaddressed and he would continue to exist within complex political, economic, and social systems that excluded his participation, yet influenced his well-being by exploiting his lack of power and influence as an Indigenous, lower-income male working towards a modified high school diploma. I realized my teaching needed to go beyond exposing all of my students to an awareness of the problems facing society and their temporary solutions, but rather look towards civic engagement as a way to influence policy and address the root causes of social and ecological injustice. While participating in civil society would not keep Graham's belly full, or his pantry stocked- it *could* help him to understand the systems of power contributing to his reality, engage with the world around him, and seek to improve it for himself and others. Developing an awareness of the reasons for food insecurity would not change the nature of Graham's reality. However, helping Graham and other students recognize their power as civic participants in a democratic society in order to address issues of public concern could give him and others like him opportunities to develop agency. All of my students and society at large could benefit by learning how to recognize systems of power, disseminate knowledge to promote activism, develop representatives, and organize to support political, economic, and institutional policies that benefit the marginalized.

As an extension to our inquiry project, the class decided they wanted to write letters requesting changes to various aspects of the industrial food system. Students wrote a multitude of letters based on their topic of interest: Some students wrote to corporations asking them to

stop using questionable food additives that had been banned in other countries, while others wrote to Health Canada, demanding more rigorous testing for agricultural chemicals. Students excitedly shared their topics with each other, as they sent their letters away. Slowly but surely as replies began to trickle in, we celebrated our successes and decided on further steps of action to take in response to disappointing replies. We discussed the resistance of some of the letter recipients and speculated about what they might have to gain from maintaining the status quo. Students developed an awareness that education on the issues, and the addition of many more voices to and actions in the civic arena were required to help create a world which would reflect our values in support of social and ecological justice. Throughout this process, Graham's demeanour changed. He participated with the passion and energy that I had previously witnessed in the beginning stages of our learning journey. My epiphany with Graham left me wondering how I might synthesize the civic engagement piece that had enraptured my foods class into other parts of the home economics curricula. I also began to wonder how other home economics educators were orienting their students to issues of social and ecological justice.

### **Aligning to the Broader Discipline: Missing the Mark**

Collegial conversations at common department meetings within my school division, and responses from the SHETA executive to an informal presentation I made with regards to research for this project have led me to believe that desire and interest for renewal exist. However, there is a discrepancy between thought and deed. An examination of the VISTA Journal of the Saskatchewan Home Economics Teachers' Association, produced quarterly since 1969, is comprised of recipes, activities, and worksheets contributed by SHETA members (SHETA, n.d.). Similarly, a focus of common department meetings within our school division centers around resource swaps. While it is tremendously important to share resources, ideas, and contacts



through professional networks, the VISTA illustrates that the focus of the organization is on the sharing of resources, and the hosting of an annual (biennial as of 2017) provincial conference comprised of many skill and technical learning sessions. A gap exists between the interests of home economics educators to make a space for an updated, critical social and ecological theoretical approach to home economics education, and the way it is actually being taught in the classroom. Collegial conversations with home economics educators in my school division, professional association (SHETA), teacher candidates at the University of Saskatchewan, and home economists from around the world whom I met at the Canadian Symposium of Home Economics in 2017 have led me to believe that the desire is there, but home economics educators are not equipped with the theoretical knowledge and perspectives necessary to transform home economics curriculum and pedagogy.

Given the current disconnect between the aims and goals of the profession within academia on an international scale, and the current state of home economics education in Saskatchewan (in part a result of fragmentation of home economics programs with the closure of the College of Home Economics in 1990), it is not surprising that home economics educators need direction to imagine a different approach to the teaching of the profession. In addition, the curriculum is in desperate need of renewal to reconnect home economics educators with the foundational objectives of the discipline at large. Given the age of the curriculum, many home economics educators will have experienced a model of home economics education that teaches towards lower-order thinking outcomes, as students in middle years, high school, and/or the Home Economics Teacher Education Program at the University of Saskatchewan. Based on my assessment of resources shared within my school division home economics common department meetings and in the SHETA *VISTA*, current teaching methods such as work sheets, lecture notes, comprehension-based question and answer, fill-in-the-blank activities, and so on, are circulated

through professional development opportunities to fulfill requirements for course theory work. The curriculum is a guide to help teachers reach outcomes for student learning that a select group of people deem are important and has a profound impact on how teachers approach their craft. Such recall-based teaching methods are appropriate to help students achieve the lower-order thinking curricular outcomes in home economics curricula. However, I counter that home economics educators should have higher expectations for their students and their discipline. How does one develop a student's critical thinking skills through an objective that requires students to memorize the parts of an egg? Furthermore, why is that knowledge important? Students can learn to make healthy, nutritious, and, economical dishes to improve the well-being of themselves and their families, without possessing knowledge that, if ever required, can be gained by looking it up on the internet.

It is important to consider that teachers need more than an updated curriculum to help the profession evolve to address issues of social and ecological justice. Home economics teacher education that develops teachers who are equipped to use higher-order thinking, critical pedagogies is necessary to support new curricula. Critical home economics practitioners are needed to teach higher-order thinking curricula through critical pedagogies. While IFHE and the academic community are actively focussed on issues of ecological and social justice, home economics educators in Saskatchewan share resources rather than engaging in higher-order thinking professional development themselves. Continuing the status quo of resource swaps, and skills-based activities such as cake decorating as professional development, perpetuates the stereotype that home economics is nothing more than sewing, cooking, and design, while negating the social-political context and implications of this work.

The fragmentation of home economics education from the larger discipline of home economics has created a gap between the goals of the profession and how it is taught in schools.

Home economics educators have not been exposed to higher-order pedagogies themselves and consequently, the status quo of a skills-based, technical mode of teaching and learning persists. Therefore, home economics in Saskatchewan does not currently have a social and ecological justice focus, due in part to the fragmentation of the discipline which has disconnected home economics from the foundational roots of the profession, and the lack of exposure by home economics educators to critical pedagogies (see chapter 6). This work aims to address each of these obstacles to the growth of the field by offering a critical theoretical framework that helps home economics educators and administrators in control of post-secondary home economics teacher education programs realign the discipline with current societal needs and other home economics practitioners on a provincial, national, and international level.

### **The Fragmentation of Home Economics: What is Lost?**

Smith and de Zwart (2010) are alarmed by international home economics teacher shortages reported by the academic community and the popular press in a majority of countries where the subject is taught. This shortage is attributed to the reduction, and restructuring of post-secondary home economics programs. Home economics research in United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand blames home economics teacher shortages on the down-sizing, restructuring, or termination of stand-alone home economics colleges and/or programs in universities (Smith & de Zwart, 2010). Smith and de Zwart (2010) relay that some post-secondary programs are reduced in size, necessitating smaller enrollments, and consequently fewer home economics educators. Shortages of home economics teachers necessitate the teaching of home economics classes by non-specialists who may lack understandings of the fundamental goals of the profession. Often the restructuring of home economics academic programs plays out as courses of value to other colleges become part of other programs, while

home economics programs are made smaller, or are retired altogether (Apple, 2015).

Commonly, nutrition and dietetics courses have become part of pharmacy and/or health science programs, while skills-based courses such as clothing and textiles, food preparation, and interior design have been absorbed by teacher education program (Apple, 2015). When home economics courses become part of narrower, specialized disciplines, it stands to reason that the theoretical underpinnings and wider sociopolitical dimensions of home economics are not transferred to students when taught by people outside the field (Apple, 2015). In the case of academic home economics programs that are reduced in size (even when taught by specialists within the field), smaller programs necessitate that portions of former courses are left out, often privileging skills-based pedagogies at the expense of critical pedagogies that align with the goals of the profession as a whole (Apple, 2015).

Home economics programming at the University of Saskatchewan followed a similar trajectory as the College of Home Economics was disestablished and its programs restructured in 1990. Nutrition and dietetics courses became part of the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition while foods preparation, clothing and textiles, and interior design made up the backbone of a new four-year Home Economics Teacher Education Program through the College of Education (Lee, 1990). In 2016, the program was further reduced to a 30-credit certificate program, accessible to those with a Bachelor of Education (Explore: Practical and Applied Arts, 2016). Having been a graduate of the four-year teacher education program, a majority of our classes focussed on getting student home economics skills up to a level where we could teach functionally in a classroom setting (I learned to sew *in* the program). Our only methods course, a program requirement, modelled practical instructional strategies (pedagogies) such as puppet shows, demonstrations, role plays, experiments. While there were theory-based courses in the teacher education program, lower-order thinking pedagogies were employed including lectures,

notes, and comprehension questions and answers — a reflection of methods appropriate for the curriculum that we would soon deliver in classrooms of our own. Evaluation was carried out through lower-order thinking, summative exams which emphasized comprehension-based questions such as classification and identification.

For example, the home economics family and technology course required the study of *More Work for Mother: The Ironies Of Household Technology From The Open Hearth To The Microwave* (Cowan, 1985). The book is a historical study of women's domestic labour within the home and the role that technology had in lowering the status of domestic work and effectively placing responsibility for that work in the realm of women's responsibility. The class answered closed-type questions that asked students to recall basic facts as a measure of accountability. If I were to teach this book, I would try to employ instructional strategies that might engage students. There are many opportunities for open-type questions that ask students to analyze and contextualize why this knowledge is important through debate and critical analysis aimed at teasing out the tensions at play in the history of a discipline rooted in women's domestic work.

Similarly, we were tasked with making solar ovens and using them to evaluate the effectiveness of each design in the same class. We focussed on the technical/skills-based aspect of the project rather than using it as an entry point to discuss disparity in living conditions for women in developing countries and linking it to wider structural and institutional oppression. The International Federation for Home Economics is a partner of the Clean Cooking Alliance (2020) initiated by the United Nations, because clean and sustainable cooking methods can free women from having to spend the day gathering fuel (wood), and improves ventilation and ultimately health outcomes for members of the family. Solar ovens contextualized within this

larger framework are a relevant topic that could serve as a practical extension of learning from Cowan's book. Clean fuel is a necessity taken for granted by many women in developed countries, who cook on stoves and have electricity, with building codes to ensure proper ventilation. Without context, the relevancy of making solar ovens was lost on me.

Considering the widespread adoption of the natural sciences to legitimize home economics as the profession evolved, theory came to be understood as scientific theory rather than education or social science theory. With a critical social science and education orientation, teachers might take a transdisciplinary approach to connect history and home economics to explore why Indigenous people in remote communities in Canada are still without safe, and affordable drinking water, nutritious and affordable food, as well as how traditional food sources are contaminated by industrial production methods (see CBC North, 2016; Global News, 2015; Health Canada, 2012). Home economics curricula contain few explicit outcomes directed towards awareness and activism about social issues affecting the well-being of Indigenous individuals, families, and communities in Saskatchewan, and Canada. The extent to which home economics teachers in Saskatchewan teach to the specific challenges facing Indigenous communities in Saskatchewan and Canada in the curriculum is questionable.

It is important that Indigenous students see themselves represented in home economics curricula to increase engagement and relevancy. It is also an act of reconciliation to help students from within settler society recognize the ethical obligation to disrupt, challenge, and change policies that reinforce colonial legacies of oppression and exploitation. There are many opportunities to avoid tokenism and move beyond bannock making in foods classes as a way of including Indigenous content, if curricula are designed inclusively. The broader discipline of

home economics might also give rise to home economics education outcomes that address Indigenous social issues to better the lives of *all* individuals, families, and communities.

Many scholars criticize prioritizing the teaching of technical, skills-based pedagogy over critical pedagogies as the former denotes an end to learning when skills are mastered (see Davis, 2000; Smith, 2017a; and Westheimer, 2015). When the outcome is achieved, learning stops. In contrast, critical pedagogies are applied in a constant process that is continually re-evaluated in an ongoing learning journey. For example, when my Foods 30 class volunteered at the Friendship Inn, a local community center and soup kitchen, I forgot to inform the kitchen staff (who were feeding the student volunteers along with their patrons) about the severe gluten allergy of one of my students, Tasia (a pseudonym). As most of the food is donated, the staff could not guarantee that lunch would not cause an allergic reaction. Tasia went without as she and her classmates discussed what options exist for people who need to access similar social programs but have dietary restrictions related to health, personal choice, and religious custom.

The class debriefed and came to the collective realization that social programs like the Friendship Inn are not accessible to all. Critical reflection and informal conversations led to an examination of our own socio-economic positioning and bias in considering an issue that had previously been invisible to us, adding a new learning dimension to our experience beyond the targeted objectives. Our epiphany rose out of my oversight, but became a learning opportunity well beyond any outcome in the home economics curriculum, as students questioned what could be done to include those who were marginalized. The experience had a significant impact on Tasia and her family. She and her mother began volunteering monthly to cook and serve at the Friendship Inn and began to donate gluten-free items through their family-owned agricultural business. Ten years into my profession, I am still learning alongside my students as I encounter new perspectives. The class service-learning opportunity came at the behest of students as part

of their decision to contribute as civic participants, illustrating how opportunities for learning surpass expectations when critical pedagogies are employed. However, fragmentation of home economics programs has disrupted the evolution of skills-based curriculum and pedagogical practices at the school and post-secondary level from aligning with the larger goals of the discipline by allowing home economics education to develop independently from the larger discipline. Historical analysis is an essential and necessary tool to help home economics educators in Saskatchewan recognize that the theoretical underpinnings of the discipline make space for the teaching of home economics beyond merely skills-based pedagogies. Reimagining a social and ecological justice theoretical framework of home economics will necessitate changes in curriculum and pedagogy as the status quo is challenged.

## **Outline**

This thesis will develop a theoretical framework for a critical social and ecological justice pedagogy of home economics, and reimagine how the subject is taught in schools in Saskatchewan. A theoretical framework will establish key concepts, models and assumptions that guide this work and show that a critical social and ecological pedagogy of home economics is grounded in established ideas. One of many possible approaches to a critical social and ecological justice pedagogy of home economics will be outlined, focussing on developing higher-order thinking to uncover systems of power, and encouraging civil participation as a means to improve the planet, and the lives of marginalized members of society.

The second chapter of this work will explain the research methodology employed, outlining the use of historical analysis through a critical feminist lens that identifies and rectifies where dominant narratives fail to represent the knowledge and experiences of those on the periphery of society. Rury (2006) and Rousmaniere (2004) provide a framework used to analyze



and interpret historical data and use it to contextualize home economics in Saskatchewan in the present. Reinharz and Davidman (1992) give background around conducting feminist research analysis to support how a historical analysis through a feminist lens differs from traditional approaches to the methodology. As a highly-gendered discipline often dismissed within the academy and school system based on the perceived preoccupation with the private (or domestic) sphere, home economics education and its practitioners have existed on the margins of core disciplines (i.e.: math and science) (Peterat, 1990). Like Alcoff and Potter (1993), and Peterat (1990), I contend that values, politics, and knowledge are intrinsically connected, contributing to the imperative that the voice of a home economics educator is added to a dialogue intended for an audience of my peers, and the institutions developing curricula and home economics programs at the University level.

A feminist lens is important to this work because home economics is a feminized discipline. Likewise, the central focus of home economics historically has been within the domestic or private sphere (generally considered to be women's work) which is devalued in a capitalist economy despite critical contributions to the quality of life for individuals, families, and communities. A feminist lens will help to evaluate the mechanisms contributing to the continued marginalization of the discipline and lend itself to considering how gender has influenced the past, in turn, shaping the reimagining of home economics in the future. I will be alert to the articulation of power through institutional social and economic practices by considering how women are portrayed and examining if women's positions typify or transgress gender norms. Through my analysis, I will question whose voices are being heard and whose are omitted, and ask who stands to gain by maintaining dominant social and cultural norms. Central to the use of a critical feminist lens is an understanding of my perception of gender as a complex spectrum centering on self-identification, while simultaneously acknowledging historical

constructs of gender as binary based on perceived differences in physiology. Inclusive of my view of gender as a spectrum, hierarchies of power will be examined as inter-related because, “Gender identity cannot be adequately understood-or even *perceived*-except as a component of complex interrelationships with other systems of identification and hierarchy...research has revealed a plethora of oppressions at work in productions of knowledge” (Alcoff & Potter, 1993, p. 3). Using a critical feminist lens, I will seek to uncover hierarchies of power and the places they intersect as I critically analyze normative assumptions in the content and subtext of the authors selected for study in this work.

Chapter three will explore the socio-political contexts of home economics through a historical analysis that will examine the development of home economics as a formalized discipline through the historic Lake Placid Conferences from 1899-1908. Tracing debates around nomenclature back to their origins at the Lake Placid Conferences is important because in the present, programs and their chosen names have diverged along with perceptions around what ought to be the purpose of the field. Beginning with the development of home economics in the United States discussed by Apple (2015), Keating (2001), Nickols and Collier (2015), the evolution of the field will be analyzed through the work of de Zwart (2003), Rowles (1964), and Wilson (2007), as it emerged within Canadian women’s networks and organizations, and formalized as courses in educational institutions. Crowley (1986), Barber (1991), Sager (2007), and Mathieu (2010) provide background around the social contexts which influenced the emergence of home economics as a discipline in Canada. An exploration of Canadian immigration policies and a shortage of domestic servants during the emergence of home economics sheds light on the need for the home economists of today to reconcile its past as a colonial tool, in order to improve the well-being of *all* individuals, families, and communities in the present, and the future.

Narrowing the scope of its broader history in chapter four, I will examine the development of home economics in Canada as it spread westward in Saskatchewan through the work of Crowley (1986), Andrews (1998), and Ambrose and Kechnie (1999). The growth and decline of home economics at the University of Saskatchewan will be traced through histories compiled by Rowles (1964), Lee (1990), McLean (2007), the College of Home Economics (2007-2008), and Jones (2014). These resources will aid in unraveling the complexities contributing to the disconnect between home economics education in Saskatchewan and the discipline of home economics as compared to what is happening in other provinces, the country, and internationally. The contributions of Adelaide Hoodless as a key figure who promoted and advocated for the development of home economics programming in Canada are recounted. In addition, links are made to Hoodless' influence on Saskatchewan home economics programs. The current state of home economics in Saskatchewan will be reviewed and assessed keeping in mind the historical socio-political contexts of its development. A periodization of home economics by Smith and de Zwart (2010) illustrates that home economics has evolved to address changing social needs over time. Through the work of the International Federation for Home Economics [IFHE] (2008), the four areas of practice and three dimensions of the discipline that must be exhibited by all subjects, courses of study, and professionals will lend support for the suitability of a critical social and ecological theoretical framework for home economics.

In chapter five, a case for the suitability of a critical social and ecological justice pedagogy for home economics in relation to the goals of the profession will be presented. Interconnections between issues of ecological justice and social justice are established as complex systems that interact and influence each other. An argument will be made in relation to Foster (2013), Bush and Lemmen (2019), the International Governmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] (2019), NASA (2019), the United Nations [UN] (2019), and the World Health

Organization [WHO] (2016; 2019), that outlines the current climate crisis as the definitive social issue of the present. The ways in which climate risks threaten the well-being of individuals, families, and communities and the relationship between social and ecological justice will be explored. Position statements on the UN's 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (IFHE, 2019) will outline the ways that home economists are actively taking to improve issues of social and ecological justice as well as articulating future goals to achieve each SDG. A cross-cultural study by Dewhurst and Pendergast (2011) provides information around home economics teacher's perceptions of sustainable development, and limiting factors to developing this further in Saskatchewan are outlined. I will draw on their arguments to create space for a transdisciplinary social and ecological justice pedagogy of home economics as an alternative to dominant technical approaches to the teaching of the discipline.

Finally, in chapter six, Smith (2017a) outlines criteria towards a theoretical framework for a pedagogy of home economics. Smith's (2017a) pedagogical model (which braids together technical, relational, and moral aspects of the profession), lays the groundwork for a critical social and ecological pedagogy of home economics. Drawing from the work of Kumashiro's (2015) anti-oppressive model of education, Westheimer (2015), and Westheimer and Kahne (2004)'s citizenship education, and Bowers (2002) and Edmundson and Martusewicz' (2013) eco-justice frameworks, I will develop the theoretical underpinnings of a critical social and ecological justice pedagogy of home economics that will empower students as citizens and agents of change towards a politically, socially, economically, and ecologically just society.

The questions aimed at helping students identify and analyze dominant systems of power are just a starting point along the path to recognizing a larger opportunity to help home economics education evolve through curriculum renewal, and pedagogical shifts in schools and university programs. Home economics educators and people making decisions regarding the

trajectory of home economics programs in post-secondary institutions need guidance in recognizing what can be gained by realigning to the goals of the profession. This involves creating higher-order curricula and pedagogies that situate teaching and learning to improve the well-being of individuals, families, and communities by developing students of home economics to take their place as active and engaged citizens in civil society as they address issues of ecological and social justice.

A historical analysis of the emergence of home economics in North America and its development in Saskatchewan makes clear that there is a continuous thread linking home economists with the pursuit of improving the well-being of individuals, families, and communities. Apple (2015) reminds us, "...we must remember that home economics accomplishes the most when it positions itself as a crucial response to social concerns" (p. 64). While social concerns have shifted over time, home economics has adapted in order to continue working towards the fundamental goal of the profession. The history of home economics in Saskatchewan and its relationships with Indigenous people highlight that there is much work to do to disrupt the ongoing colonial project. A critical social and ecological justice pedagogy of home economics allows a pathway to actualize steps towards reconciliation through an anti-oppressive stance, informed by eco-justice pedagogies that value intergenerational knowledge. Looking to the history of home economics is an essential exercise that can help inform and shape the present trajectory of the discipline and the way that it is taught in Saskatchewan.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

To encourage a dialogue around the suitability of a critical social and ecological justice pedagogy for the teaching of home economics in Saskatchewan, it is essential to outline the theoretical framework, and methodological considerations that guided my interpretation and analysis. I will provide an outline of the approach taken to conduct a historical analysis of primary and secondary sources to understand how home economics became a formalized discipline, providing insight on, “the intersection of gender and professionalism” (Stage, 2017, p. 2). In a similar way, I looked to the past through interpreting selected historical texts to explore the evolution of home economics in North America and at the University of Saskatchewan (U of S), and examine contemporary research rooted in the ongoing debate on the central goals of the discipline, and its role in fostering well-being in individuals, families, and communities in the midst of current social and ecological crises.

Lending to the transparency employed in analysis for this project, I explore the implications of my interpretation and analysis through a critical feminist lens as it informs the process of connecting home economics’ past with contemporary home economics research. From the selection of materials chosen for examination to the types of questions used throughout the processes of analysis, a critical feminist lens provides an understanding of the history of home economics from a particular perspective influencing knowledge creation. Understanding the past can help inform the present, aiding the evolution of the discipline as it once again reacts to changing social, political, and economic conditions.

## **Theoretical Framework: A Critical Feminist Lens**

A critical feminist lens serves as the overarching theoretical framework guiding my research. Rooted in Critical Feminist Theories, my research lends to understandings of how cultural structures and practices shaped home economics, and how home economics shaped cultural structures and practices (Wood, 2008). Borrowing from two distinct traditions, Wood (2008) explains, “Critical Feminist Theories are subsets of two broader groups of theories: Feminist Theories, not all of which are critical, and Critical Theories, not all of which are feminist.” (p. 2). The intersection of Feminist and Critical Theories aim to identify, critique, and reform patriarchal ideologies, and oppressive cultural and structures and practices, particularly those based on sex and gender (Wood, 2008). Focussed on how dominant and marginalized groups deploy and resist power structures, Critical Feminist Theories examine formal (explicit) and informal (implicit) power and the ways that it maintains inequitable roles and expectations for women and men’s behaviour (Wood, 2008). Critical Feminist Theories are interested in the empowerment of women, but also seek change for other marginalized groups, challenging dominant masculinist, and heteronormative ideologies of Western culture (Wood, 2008). A critical feminist lens applied to this research is meant to raise awareness of women’s experiences, perspectives, and knowledge, particularly in a feminized discipline, historically rooted in unpaid domestic labour within the private sphere.

I bring a value system to this work that rejects patriarchal assumptions, concepts, and research that positions women as inferior. My ideologies recognize systems of power embedded in all aspects of social life, including the influence of my own social positioning in knowledge creation. I acknowledge race, class, and gender discrimination in home economics, and towards home economics. Simultaneously, home economics has afforded opportunities for agency and resistance. Through a critical feminist lens, I conduct a gender analysis of systems of power and

control, encourage dialogue and participation in generating transformative change; review history from women's perspectives, reject any positivist, grand narrative approach; and avoid speaking *to* or *for* home economists, instead presenting my experiences or ideas with the intent and desire of reciprocated discourse (Lather, 2004). A lens of critical feminism is important because it aligns to the action-oriented motivation driving this work- "...to rally around the vision of social transformation, emancipation, and social justice" (Peterat, 1989, p. 211). This research is an act of resistance as I attempt to challenge the way home economics is situated within academic hierarchies as well as the way the teaching of home economics is conceptualized and applied in schools.

### **Methodological Considerations: Feminist Historical Analysis**

The present state of home economics in Saskatchewan can be understood through the complex history of home economics and the socio-political contexts occurring alongside pivotal moments in the development of the discipline. Having touched upon the restructuring of home economics programs in post secondary institutions, and the consequential fragmentation of unified epistemological and pedagogical approaches to the teaching of home economics in Chapter 1, it is essential to develop an understanding of the history of the profession in order to make a case for a critical social and ecological justice pedagogy of home economics in the present. An understanding of the history of the profession makes clear that home economics in North America has evolved and adapted the ways in which it has met its goal of improving well-being for families, individuals and communities, according to changing issues of import to society.

Historical research employs an inductive approach where researchers subjectively analyze primary documents or recorded accounts from witnesses or participants in an event from



the period being studied, supplemented by secondary sources written by researchers (historians or others) who have investigated primary documents (Rousmaniere, 2004; Rury, 2006). Like traditional historians, feminist historians also rely on primary and secondary sources of data to study individual women or groups of women, relations between women and men, relations among women, the intersection of race, gender, class, [sexuality] and age identities, and the institutions, persons, and ideas that have shaped women's lives (Reinharz and Davidman, 1992, p. 155). Reliability is based on standards of argumentation and an exhaustive reading of primary and secondary sources (Rury, 2006). Primary documents and artifacts are emphasized to understand the event itself; however, secondary sources weigh heavily into a researcher's interpretation of research because understanding multiple perspectives and interpretations of an event lends itself to conducting a comprehensive review of available material on the subject. A back-and-forth between primary documents and other historical artifacts, cross-examined against secondary sources occurs as the data "speaks" to historians and coherent explanations are constructed (Rury, 2006).

A feminist approach to categorize artifacts for study is to sort texts produced *by* women, *about* women, or *for* women (Reinharz and Davidman, 1992). The selection of texts for analysis aims to represent a range of experiences, and levels of status: "Dual attention to women as a single category and as differentiated is, I believe, a hallmark of feminist research" (Reinharz and Davidman, 1992, p. 16). Feminist historians' question who determines knowledge, ways that knowledge is produced, and how research methods exclude certain narratives, (Reinharz and Davidman, 1992). Evidence is fragmentary and can be difficult to interpret (Rury, 2006). Historians rely on tangible documents that have survived over time. However, content and interpretation from the researcher can also be fragmented. Historians are often limited by information that has survived: "Unlike other social scientists, historians cannot gather evidence

up to the point that they feel important questions have been addressed” (Rury, 2006, p. 325).

Historical analysis relies on thorough and comprehensive examination of available sources of evidence, and looks to well-informed interpretation to reconstruct gaps in the evidence.

In the case of this work, three main primary sources were consulted in order to understand the roots of home economics. Catherine Beecher’s, *A Treatise on Domestic Economy*, written in 1841, and Dr. Edward Youman’s *The Handbook of Household Science: A popular account of Heat, Light, Air, Ailment, and Cleansing in their scientific and domestic applications*, written in 1857, were highly influential to burgeoning home economists before the professionalization of the discipline. Published proceedings of the first three Lake Placid Conferences spanning 1899-1901, provide an important record of the first meetings where the formalization of the discipline of home economics began. Analysis of the Lake Placid Conferences has an immense scope (see Vaines, 1981).

While two other volumes for the published proceedings of the remaining conferences were consulted, only the first three were referenced in this work in an attempt to narrow the focus of this study and concentrate on the development of home economics in Canada. Home economics in Canada emerged within the time frame of the first three Lake Placid Conferences. Classes in home economics were being taught in Canada by 1894 in Ontario, with a school of domestic science founded in 1903 (Crowley, 1986). The author of the first conference proceedings provided only brief notes and a rough outline of events and discussions. In contrast, detailed summaries of presentations were provided, along with conference agendas in published proceedings of the next two conferences. The Lake Placid Conferences are pivotal to spirited debate by home economists around what should and ought to be the purpose of the discipline based around the implications of the name chosen to represent the profession. A researcher’s interpretations are accepted by

peers if it conforms to the wider expectations of the research community; therefore, the research of others must be taken into consideration (Rury, 2006). Contention around the foundational objectives of the discipline warrants an examination of secondary research to identify how other home economists interpret the Lake Placid Conferences. To this end, several secondary sources written by home economists helped to supplement and construct understandings of nomenclature debates stemming from dissatisfaction with the implications of various monikers including the one that was ultimately chosen to represent the discipline, home economics (see Apple, 2015; de Zwart, 2017; Goldstein, 2012; Nickols & Collier, 2015; Peterat, 1989, 1990; Stage, 1997; Vaines, 1981; Wilson, 2007).

While most historians view these gaps in data as an opportunity to apply developed knowledge of events towards an informed interpretation, feminist historians question the implications of the gaps in knowledge and how they came to be (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992). Reinharz and Davidman (1992) discern, “By discovering patterns between existing and missing documents, and with power/gender relations in the society of the time, and by bringing this material to the attention of people today, new ties are made that help explain the current relation between gender and power and give some groups a greater sense of their own history” (p. 163). In the case of the first Lake Placid Conference, the rich discussion which must have occurred around implications of different names is missing from the first conference proceedings. Volume 1 of the first proceedings explains, “After full discussion, the name ‘ Home economics ’ was agreed on as the title preferable for the whole general subject...While home economics was taken as a general term, it may be wise to use other phrases for its subdivisions” (American Home Economics Association, 1901, p. 4-5). Names appropriate for different levels of home economics education are outlined, but a detailed account of the implications of various names for the discipline are omitted. This omission may contribute to the ongoing debate around the goals

of the discipline, and the implications of different names for programs around the world in the present.

Rousmaniere (2004) and Rury (2006) describe the challenges of historical research centered around availability of sources which can sometimes be limited compared to other forms of systematic inquiry. Without a graduate program of home economics, I was challenged by the limited availability of resources on home economics through the U of S. I assume that home economics research is not actively being conducted, and there is not a high demand for home economics research consumption by students at the U of S. I also had very little knowledge around the development of my chosen profession, in Saskatchewan or elsewhere. Having attended a research session at the Education Library, my starting point was through data bases such as ProQuest and Eric (Ovid). Time spent searching the databases gave me a sense of the limited research available, and most articles I perused didn't seem connected with my research question. Even with adjustments to my search terms, I was not having luck finding relevant sources of information. A digital chronology produced by the University Archives and Special Collection (2018) department helped situate the development of home economics at the U of S alongside its emergence as a profession in the United States.

I spent several days in the University Archives where I looked through the home economics fonds. I discovered important primary sources to develop my understanding of home economics in Saskatchewan including personal documents of Gwenna Moss (Dean of the College of Home Economics at the University of Saskatchewan in 1982), and the personal binder of Robin Douthitt, Assistant and then later Associate professor in the College of Home Economics from 1982-1986, when she resigned (College of Home Economics, 2007-2008). The home economic fonds also contained a history of home economics at the U of S from 1917-1990 with contributions from the dean and former deans of the college: Edith Rowles (Simpson), Hope

Hunt, Gwenna Moss, Eva Lee, and Douglas Gibson. A copy of Edith Rowles (1964) book, *Home Economics in Canada - The History of Six College Programs: Prologue to Change*, was also in the home economics fonds and provided an important local source of secondary information.

Robin Douthitt's binder was of particular interest as it contained artifacts such as memos, minutes of meetings, and minutes from an internal assessment of the review of the College of Home Economics that occurred between 1985-1986. Douthitt was a faculty member of the College of Home Economics and was a member of the Internal Assessment Steering Committee. Private documents can illustrate how individual lives vary from dominant narratives while public documents develop social context but do not tell us much about the behaviour or emotions of the individual (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992). Feminist historians include a variety of sources that examine the lives of both ordinary *and* exceptional women, in public and private spheres (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992). For example, Rowles (1964), Crowley (1986) and Ambrose and Kechnie (1999) were secondary sources consulted to learn about Adelaide Hoodless, a prominent Canadian home economist who is credited with the growth and expansion of home economics programs in Canada. In contrast, the inclusion of Douthitt's binder as a primary source of data is important to give perspective from a faculty member in the College of Education around 1985/1986 as, "Historically ignored women are made visible when the relevant artifacts are located and studied, and conversely, analysis of this type of material illuminates the forces that shape the lives of the vast majority in contrast to the elite minority" (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992, p. 156).

Douthitt's private binder is filled with personal hand written notes from meetings, as well as memos, and submissions from faculty around the review process for the College of Home Economics which seemed to be a source of excessive stress for staff and students. Douthitt's

binder resonated with me because of the ongoing legacy that many home economists have felt in defending the legitimacy of home economics within academia, and the fight to keep home economics post-secondary and teacher education programs alive (Apple, 2015; de Zwart, 2003; Dupuis, 2017; Lee, 1990; Nickols & Collier, 2015; Peterat 1989; Renwick, 2017, Wilson, 2007). Their tenacity is fueled, in part, by the passion and belief that home economics can help improve the lives of individuals, families, and communities (Apple, 2015; de Zwart, 2003; Dupuis, 2017; Lee, 1990; Nickols & Collier, 2015; Peterat 1989; Renwick, 2017, Wilson, 2007).

There is evidence illustrating steps that faculty took in order to organize support for the continuation of the college. A brief summary of a faculty-developed student survey for undergraduate students demonstrates how student voice was included to understand what made students apply for the college, alternative post-secondary options, importance of local post-secondary offerings, and evaluation of course programming (rigor, and levels of challenge and satisfaction) (Pain, 1986). A brief summary of a letter by the Home Economics Students' Society [HESS] suggested that food science and dietetics programming be offered through different colleges and that clothing was important but job prospects were limited in the province (Pain, 1986). The HESS shared their perceptions that:

The students had low opinions of the status of the College within the University and of the prestige of the Home Economics profession. Their pessimism resulted from the small size and low profile of the College, the links of the College to less powerful societal units such as small businesses and consumers and the stereotypical views of society regarding Home Economists. (Pain, 1986, p. 7)

What the HESS based their assertions on about student's opinion of the status of the College is unknown, however it does provide a small measure of student voice, even if only the beliefs of the HESS themselves.

Douthitt's binder also contained a document she created with a series of questions to provoke dialogue amongst faculty of the College around the time of the review. The document probes

faculty to articulate why (philosophically) it is important to have a discipline in a provincial university that focuses on the family and its interaction with the community/the environment (Douthitt, 1985). As part of the recorded responses, the faculty unanimously voted that the College needed restructuring and provided suggestions for areas of study to add to current programming, as well as identifying areas of study to be terminated (Douthitt, 1985). Seven faculty members felt that the College should negotiate with the College of Education to take responsibility for the preparation of home economics teachers — four faculty members disagreed (Douthitt, 1985). A noted disadvantage to this move was that the College of Home Economics would have less of control over high school curricular content (Douthitt, 1985).

A report prepared by the dean and assistant dean of the College of Education, for the College of Home Economics Review Committee affirmed the importance of home economics consultation in processes of curricula development (Hersom & Lyons, 1986). The report referenced two provincial documents that signalled many changes in the field of education in Saskatchewan at the time of the review, including the Directions Report and a report (that had been anticipated but not yet released) proposing changes to the way core curriculum would be included and taught (Hersom & Lyons, 1986). Hersom and Lyons (1986) also referenced a special task force established by the Deputy Minister of Saskatchewan meant to examine comprehensive schools and technical/vocational education. They explained,

Home economics is one of the subject areas that would be under consideration. This is a critical period in terms of opportunity for leadership in curriculum development. It is particularly regrettable at this juncture to contemplate the prospect of this University becoming so absorbed in its internal concerns that it cannot fulfill its rightful role of leadership in this field. (Hersom & Lyons, 1986, p. 5-6)

Concerns around having less influence to shape high school curricula suggests that faculty of the College of Home Economics realized that the autonomy to determine content area knowledge would be out of their hands. The document prepared by Douthitt is important because it

illustrates self-reflection, as well as preparatory element to unite faculty in defense of the College. Similarly, a memo in the College Review binder from faculty members Bev and Heather sent to the rest of the College of Home Economics faculty, advises reading the memo prior to a meeting the next day (Pain & Maclean, 1985). The memo includes a flow chart with the objective of developing a unified approach as to why both physical science and social/behavioural science streams of home economics should remain integrated in the College of Home Economics. These documents are important because they illustrate actions taken to unite faculty and students of the College.

In a College Review binder I located in the archives, a memo to B.A. Holmlund and B.R. Schnell, from Gwenna Moss (the College of Home Economics dean) explained her and the faculty's concerns about the review process:

Review of Colleges and other units are a normal University function. However, this College feels — with some justification — that it has been reviewed more often than most units, and that the reviews usually take place in an atmosphere of uncertainty or threat. A chronology of the reviews and administrative changes of the last 13 years is attached. (Moss, 1985, p. 2)

The chronology documented frequent administrative changes between 1972, when Dean Edith Rowles Simpson retired, and the next review of the role of the College of Home Economics in 1974-1975 (Moss, 1985). There were four major administrative changes in the leadership of the College from 1972-1976 when Douglas Gibson became the dean until 1981. Moss (1985) chronicled how two major curricular revision proposals put forth by the Curriculum Committee College of Home Economics to the Academic Affairs Committee of Council in 1976 were rejected. In 1979, Dr. R. Vosburgh from the University of Guelph was brought in to consult on a new curriculum (Moss, 1985). The first two years of the new curriculum were approved by council by December of 1979 along with the segmenting of the College of Home Economics into two divisions (Moss, 1985). The remaining two years were approved in 1981, when T.J. Abernathy was also appointed the dean of the College to replace Douglas Gibson (Moss, 1985).



Abernathy went on to resign in 1982, when an acting was found until the appointment of Dean Moss in July of 1982 (Moss, 1985).

In minutes of a meeting with Holmlund (Vice President of Special Projects), Schnell (Vice President Academic), and the College of Home Economics faculty, the viability of home economics programming and the reason for the review were outlined. Schnell explained that the relevance of the unit (The College of Home Economics) to society's needs would be measured by, "...perceived scholarly activity of the faculty as judged by **peers outside** [emphasis added] the unit" (College of Home Economics, 1985). This is problematic considering tensions and negative perceptions of home economics at the U of S, shared by numerous faculty and students (see also: memorandum from J. A. Olson in chapter 4). In addition, Moss challenged Holmlund and Schnell, asserting that the review seemed to be initiated from recent judgements by the University Budgetary Committee (Moss, 1985). I was particularly aware of these tensions while reading about them, as I connected my own ongoing sense of powerlessness stemming from decision-making power for home economics in the present being situated in the hands of people outside the profession.

Books about the subject of home economics at the U of S were not current and research was limited, although I read what I found hoping to locate information to deepen my understanding of the development of home economics. Internet searches using Google Scholar, and Amazon helped me find current books examining home economics history including *Remaking Home Economics: Resourcefulness and Innovation in Changing Times* by Nickols and Kay (2015), and *Creating Consumers: Home economists in twentieth century America* by Goldstein (2014). Dianne Miller, my supervisor, loaned me an edition of Beecher's manual from 1977, originally published in 1841. After learning that Youman's manual was also influential in early home economics programs, I discovered a digital copy scanned from the book published in 1857

through Google e-books. I found the Lake Placid Conference Proceedings through the HEARTH database at the University of Cornell--an online archive. My search for data took me in many different directions. The path was not straightforward and many times I had found myself blazing a new trail.

Histories of marginalized groups often lack representation in recorded historical documents and artifacts, as records kept often privilege dominant groups. Henry (2006) explains that when records of marginalized groups have survived, they have often been interpreted through patriarchal, colonial frameworks that do not speak to the lived experience of witnesses and participants. Identifying patriarchal influence in historical records, Henry (2006) admonishes that, “Certain lives, practices, and ways of being are omitted from “his-story”” (p. 339). Worthy of note is a project committee including former faculty and alumni from the College of Home Economics at the U of S, who worked to commemorate “her-story” through an online exhibit/archive of the College of Home Economics as well as by establishing a physical exhibit in the main lobby of the Thorvaldson building in 2006. The College of Home Economics digital exhibit served as an important secondary source of evidence produced by home economists, for home economists. In addition to the element of nostalgia, the undertaking of such a project seems to be an act of resistance (intentional or not) as home economists sought to make known the contributions of home economists in the history and development of the U of S.

## **Historical Context**

Historical research focusses on context through the temporal dimensions of history — events are explained in terms of other events, situated in the socio-political background of the time period (Rury, 2006). In order to understand the development of home economics in Saskatchewan, many secondary sources were consulted to build context around the socio-

political climate of the day. For historians, addressing the connectedness of events gives credence to the complexities of the socio-political contexts shaping them, and is considered a form of evidence (Rury, 2006). Some researchers use context to explain the period itself to get a sense of what it was like to live in that time period as well as how conditions contributed to the course of events or *chains of causality* (Rury, 2006, pg. 325). Rury (2006) notes that while context is important in other social science methodologies, historians are hyper-focussed on explaining and describing events. The complexities of context make direct causation difficult as interrelated events are not intended to be replicated or testable (Rury, 2006). Thus, historical analysis offers a more personal dimension from other disciplines because “...historians seek “sufficient” explanations of events, whereas other social scientists often strive to define causal models for verification” (Rury, 2006, p. 325).

Several secondary sources were consulted to help understand the socio-political context of the times. Sager (2007) and Barber (1991)’s work lent to understanding the changes that took place in the area of domestic service in Canada between 1870-1940s. Changes to domestic service in Canada were also heavily influenced by xenophobic immigration policies between 1890-1911, contextualized through Mathieu (2010). A shortage of domestic servants drove one faction of home economists to formalize the discipline in response to the “servant problem” (Stage, 1997). Nason (2019) makes visible the contribution of Indigenous women in domestic service on the prairies, through the outing system — an extension of the assimilative practices occurring in Industrial schools. Ambrose and Kechie, (1999) and Andrews (1998) provided insight into Women’s Institutes (WI’s) founded in Canada by 1897 and Milne (2004) on Homemaker’s Clubs in Saskatchewan between 1911-1961. Both WI’s and Homemaker’s Clubs were important as sites of early home economics courses, and later as part of a larger network to disseminate information and rally for support of more formalized home economics courses to be

offered. Adelaide Hoodless' was one of the founders of WI's which supported her later advocacy work in the promoting the development of formalized home economics programming across Canada. Finally, extensions programs were important as a connection between home economics and agriculture whereby home economists helped support rural women as explained by McLean (2007) in a history of extension services in Saskatchewan. Home economics in Saskatchewan developed within a larger network of organizations and socio-political events that help shed light on the social conditions that helped bring the discipline into being, and it is crucial to acknowledge the ways that women supported each other to advance their interests.

## **Interpretation**

Historical analysis involves a personal dimension, in part due to the emphasis on interpretation (Rury, 2006), and because of the narrative and descriptive elements of historical research that give us insight into specific lives and experiences. The interplay between evidence, positionality of the researcher, and their interpretive framework makes history research contentious, wrought with debate and conflict. In addition, interpretations evolve as socio-political frames of reference shift and new evidence arises, leaving previous interpretations open to debate and controversy (Rury, 2006). Rury (2006) contends that it is precisely these debates which advance the field, make it interesting, and produce strong models of historical scholarship. Feminist historian Linda Gordon (1991) asserts that arbitrary gaps in evidence provide historians with a sense of liberty as a level of personal judgement affords an interpretative license not afforded to many other disciplines within the social sciences (as cited in Rury, 2006). Therefore, historical researchers develop interpretations that are deeply personal, influenced by their interpretative framework, which affects processes of inquiry, directing the focus of the researcher's gaze (Rousmaniere, 2004; Rury 2006).

The significance of this interpretive element lies in the fact that historical research is not a pure transmission of the past and is extremely value laden (Rousmaniere, 2004; Rury, 2006). Filtered through a critical feminist lens, I contend that history is a social construct interpreted through the perspective of the original authors of primary documents, further altered through the interpretive frameworks, and positionality of authors of secondary sources of research. A critical feminist lens contributed in the articulation of a particular ontological, and epistemological stance which influenced the types of research questions being asked and ultimately, the trajectory of interpretation (Henry, 2006; Neuman, 2014; Peterat 1989; Reinharz & Davidman, 1992). Overarching questions guiding analysis and interpretation of selected documents for this work asked critical questions to summarize 1) What texts said; 2) What texts did not say; and 3) what texts might have said (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992). While not directly addressed in the analysis of primary and secondary sources of data, the critical questions for analysis posed by Reinharz and Davidman (1992) implicitly guided the process of making meaning from what I read as I developed recommendations and drew conclusions about my research. Rousmaniere (2004) and Rury (2006) describe how interpretations of texts change as different combinations of selected works for research influence interpretations.

History is rewritten as it continues to be interpreted through ever-evolving social contexts, and the positionality and lived experience of the researcher, which are in a continual state of change. Neuman (2014) adds that all experiences are subjective when filtered through one's social positioning within hierarchies of race, class, gender, ability, and sexuality. Lather (2004) explains the methods of gathering and reporting data as well as methodological choice (theoretical paradigms underlying research) are value laden and influenced by the social positioning of the researcher. In addition, interpretations evolve as socio-political frames of reference shift (e.g., the current climate crises shifting interpretations of home economics as

sewing and cooking skills towards sustainability practices) and new evidence arises, leaving previous interpretations open to debate and controversy (Rury, 2006).

I demonstrate reflexivity by articulating my research goals of advocacy and emancipation here, in chapter 1, and revisiting the motivation driving my research in chapter 6. I consider that my research posits home economics in a hierarchy between skills/trades versus academic discipline and will explore the implications of this dichotomy. I also consider how romanticizing research as political intervention and the drive to prove the relevance of academic work might limit accessibility of research findings to an audience with whom the work is meant to be in conversation. Through editing and analysis, I revisited critical questions about hierarchies at play in my research. For example, a common thread connecting a majority of home economists who forged the foundations of the discipline is their positionality as middle-class white women. Ambrose and Kechie (1999) explain that Adelaide Hoodless and others in top positions in Women's Institutes — an important conduit for early domestic training classes — "...intended from the outset that the leadership of the WI should be drawn from women of "culture and leisure, who could devote time and energy" to the development of the project [the formal establishment of WI's]" (p. 228). While professionalization of the discipline helped women gain access to paid employment in institutions of higher education, the professionalization of a discipline has its drawbacks (Stage, 1997). The Lake Placid conferences were partly about standardization of the field towards professionalizing the discipline, in addition to developing exclusivity by defining what home economics was not, leaving some on or outside the margins (Stage, 1997). Home economists at the Lake Placid Conferences entrenched the status of varying home economics programs by delineating curricula and language to describe home economics at elementary, high-school, and post-secondary levels creating social stratification within the field. In addition to inadvertently replicating social hierarchies of power

within the discipline, it privileged the voices of middle-class white women and their understandings of domestic work to the exclusion of women from other social strata.

Lather (2004) insists that critical methodologies must juggle advocacy and scholarship in the process of knowledge generation used to unsettle dominant systems of power. Both feminist historical analysis and contemporary analysis are filtered through my insider knowledge and experiences as a home economics educator of 13 years, graduate of a Bachelor of Education majoring in home economics from the U of S, and a woman employed in a gendered discipline. I aim to generate new research to empower a culture group to which I belong. As a home economist, teacher, wife, and mother, I am attempting to produce new knowledge *about* women, *for* women. I also hope that this reaches an audience of those making administrative decisions about curricula and home economics post-secondary programming in Saskatchewan in order to change the way the discipline is conceptualized and valued within educational and academic hierarchies. The experiences I bring to the research and my interpretations will not speak for all home economists, nor is it intended to do so. Rather it is meant to spark meaningful dialogue to advance the aims of the profession as one voice in a collective group of home economists working towards a shared vision to improve the lives of individuals families, and communities.

### **Contemporary Analysis**

As part of the process of making meaning from the history of home economics, a contemporary analysis of current research conducted by specialists within the field is essential to illustrate the ways in which home economics concepts and models have evolved. Rousmaniere (2004) posits, "...the field of the history of education has always stood partly between past and present, and for many educational historians, the driving question of their research is simultaneously historical and contemporary" (p. 36). An examination of current home

economics research supports the need for a critical pedagogy for social and ecological justice in Saskatchewan, by grounding it on established ideas and concepts. Looking to weave past and present is an important practice in what de Zwart (2017) explains as “an act of “remembering forward” — a reflection on the past....as it potentially informs the future.” (p. 53). Developing the ways in which contemporary home economics researchers support the pursuit of social and ecological justice is important to reorient home economics education in Saskatchewan to the larger goals of the profession.

Akin to my experiences in home economics historical research, I encountered similar limitations in the lack of current home economics research available through U of S databases and print sources at the university library. Anna Neissen, a colleague who was enrolled in the Master of Education in Home Economics Education program at the University of British Columbia, was generous with her time and insight, sharing resources and helping to guide me through essential pieces of home economics research. At her suggestion, I sought out the research of Mary Gale Smith, one of her professors, only to find that she had a profile on the website Academia.edu. I requested to view several of her articles and she responded by generously sharing her work with me. Smith’s connection was particularly important as I gained access to Canadian research in home economics and was invited to the Canadian Symposium home economics conference amidst a network of home economists from across the world. The Canadian Symposium brought me knowledge of the International Journal of Home Economics which opened up a wide range of peer reviewed home economics research that I previously did not know existed. These new insights into home economics research along with the perusal of research I had access to, led me down a rabbit hole of sorts as I chased tangents related to my original research question. Ultimately, the data selected was piecemeal as I wove together my



sources and made something bigger out of the fragments I had started with. As is often the case in home economics, resourcefulness helped me make do with what I had.

A major divergence from home economics specific research were secondary sources selected to inform my understandings of climate change, climate risks and the impact on human systems, including reports from Environment and Climate Change Canada (Bush & Lemmen, 2019), the United Nations [UN] (2019), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] (2019), and the World Health Organization [WHO] (2019). These sources were discovered through new articles I read out of personal interest that made me aware of alarming research in support of taking urgent climate action. I sourced the reports and read them to confirm and broaden my understanding of the current climate crises. The reports are important to this work because they outline climate risks and their impacts, lending to the development of an argument as to how the well-being of individuals, families, and communities is endangered as a direct result of industrial processes causing increases in global temperatures. The data reveals that climate risks threaten all people but vulnerable populations are particularly at risk, underscoring the need for social justice action to occur alongside action for ecological justice. To support the movement of the discipline towards social and ecological justice, a primary source in the form of a position paper released by IFHE (2019) explains the many ways that home economics is contributing to the UN Sustainable Development goals. A cross-cultural, primary source of data by Dewhurst and Pendergast (2011) surveying teacher's perceptions of sustainability education adds to understandings of how some Canadian home economics understand and teach towards sustainability education in their classrooms. A position statement (a primary document) by the International Federation of Home Economics or IFHE (2008) situates the four domains of practice between academia, school (home economics education for students), home (everyday life), and society. IFHE's (2008) statement outlines the three dimensions of home economics

practice that programs and professionals must strive to pursue, further strengthening the case that there is a space for a critical social and ecological justice pedagogy of home economics in pursuit of the goals of the profession.

Smith (2017) provides current discourse, as a Canadian home economist, that weaves together three perspectives on home economics pedagogy that she argues should be braided together towards a transformative pedagogy of home economics. Smith's work is important because it establishes the appropriateness of a critical social and ecological justice pedagogy of home economics. In addition, it illuminates the need for higher order home economics curricula to orient students to the ways in which their well-being (and that of others) is being negatively impacted by climate crises, and compels them to mobilize through civic engagement. While Smith's (2017a) model develops a foundation for a transformative pedagogy, Kumashiro's model (2015) of anti-oppressive education provides the structure. Combined with facets of Westheimer's (2015) citizenship education model and eco-justice through the work of Edmundson and Martusewicz (2013) and Bowers (2002), I connect the ways in which a critical social and ecological justice pedagogy of home economics meets the theoretical considerations laid out by Smith (2017a) and the aims of the discipline at large.

## **Contemporary Context**

Like historical analysis, context is essential to position contemporary research in support of a social and ecological theoretical framework for the teaching of home economics in Saskatchewan. This task is made all the more relevant as it is being written in the midst of a global pandemic caused by the coronavirus, leading to the disease COVID-19. The pandemic has exposed weaknesses in our global systems where food security, health, and economic

systems are proving to be unsustainable and inequitable. A joint statement issued on the occasion of an Extraordinary G20 Agriculture Ministers' Meeting asserts:

The pandemic is already affecting the entire food system. Restrictions on movement within and across countries can hinder food-related logistic services, disrupt entire food supply chains and affect the availability of food. Impacts on the movement of agricultural labor and on the supply of inputs will soon pose critical challenges to food production, thus jeopardizing food security for all people, and hit especially hard people living in the poorest countries. (Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, International Fund for Educational Development, The World Bank, & World Food Program, par. 3, 2020)

Food security is but one of the many examples of the fragility of global systems that the coronavirus has brought to light. Another is the way in which some individuals, families, and communities in developed countries are reconnecting with “domestic skills” like cooking, baking, and gardening that have been typically outsourced to businesses in contemporary life.

Home economics has potential to contribute to a fair and just society. The extent to which home economics in Saskatchewan can play in helping individuals, families, and communities cultivate equitable and sustainable futures is uncertain. Other contextual factors influencing analysis of contemporary home economics research are rooted in the current state of the discipline in Saskatchewan. Home economics educators do not have professional development or teacher education programs to support learning for critical social and ecological justice. Currently, a practical and applied arts certificate program through the College of Education at the U of S is the only home economics post-secondary program available to train teachers in home economics in the province of Saskatchewan. The program was placed on the college’s “Strategic Enrollment Plan” in 2018/2019, that may have included effort to rethink course delivery, increase enrollment, or evaluate its continuation. As of June 2020, there are no students enrolled. Home economics curricula renewal processes at the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education are also underway and the degree to which they will reflect current trends in home economics research nationally and internationally is unknown.

## **Interpretation**

A critical feminist lens will influence the sources chosen for examination, guide the types of questions asked of the data, as well as impacting the conclusions derived from material for analysis. Analysis will be filtered through the layers of my own social positioning, with an underlying motivation to improve the way that the discipline of home economics is stratified in academic hierarchies, and advocate for strengthening of home economics post secondary programming, and curricula renewal that aligns outcomes and indicators with current theoretical and pedagogical approaches to the teaching of home economics. I will work to identify, critique, challenge, and disrupt oppressive cultural and structural practices, being specifically attuned towards sex and gender oppression. By changing the way that home economics is conceptualized and taught in schools, home economics can increase its relevance by equipping individuals, families, and communities with ways that they can live sustainably, advancing equity as part of an active citizenry towards improved well-being for all.

Through a critical feminist lens, I consider the relationship between curricula and pedagogy. I also inquire about the impact that limited access to professional development opportunities (beyond technical/skills-based opportunities) has on the willingness for home economists to make space for critical social and ecological pedagogy for home economics. I ask about the ways in which climate risks threaten people and the planet and the well-being of individuals and families. I consider the role that home economics can play in achieving well being through sustainability practices and civic engagement. I explore the ways that the history of home economics can inform home economics in the present. I approach analysis with an awareness of a partiality to glorify home economics, and work to avoid presenting it as a singular solution to the climate crises. I work to recognize some of the challenges facing the discipline, with the understanding that solutions to climate change involve the interplay of a complex network of

systems. Improving the well-being of individuals, families, and communities through a critical social and ecological justice pedagogy of home economics represents but one contribution among many required to improve climate risks affecting the well-being of humans and the planet.

In addressing some of the challenges facing home economics in the present, “it cannot be ignored that different stakeholders and non-home economists have very varied opinions about the potentials in the field of home economics, and it cannot be ignored that some perceive home economics as having a fracturing identity and low societal relevance” (Harden, Hall, & Pucciarelli, 2018 as cited in Christensen, 2019, p. 78). The power to challenge deeply entrenched beliefs about the worth of the discipline by non-home economists is possible if we have something relevant to offer. Making visible the contributions of home economics in the past, acknowledging the state of home economics in Saskatchewan in the present, and imagining the possibilities for the future of home economics offers opportunities for growth. Bringing important home economics knowledge and skills to the forefront of the public eye is important to making the value of home economics visible. Looking to the College of Home Economics (2007-2008) project committee members who worked to make the contribution of home economics at the U of S known, so must we work to champion the contributions that home economics can make to improve the well-being of individuals, families, and communities.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE EMERGENCE OF HOME ECONOMICS IN NORTH AMERICA

#### Freeze Frame

No other series of historical events has shaped the trajectory of home economics as much as the Lake Placid Conferences (occurring between 1899-1908), which formalized the subject as a field of study. Widely referenced and continually analyzed by home economics researchers (see Apple, 2015; de Zwart, 2017; Goldstein, 2012; Nickols & Collier, 2015; Peterat, 1989, 1990; Stage, 1997; Vaines, 1981; Wilson, 2007), the Lake Placid Conferences are pivotal because they are a significant moment in a complicated and nuanced history where practitioners had agency in setting the course of the discipline. Participants were united by a common interest in domestic training and education as a critical pathway to improve the lives of individuals and families, as deeply entrenched social divisions between public (the domain of wage-earning employment, politics, commerce, and law *outside* the home) and private spheres (the site of non-wage-earning childcare, housekeeping, and religion *in* the home), situated women's knowledge and experience in the latter (American Home Economics Association, 1901). Conference participants were comprised of women from diverse educational backgrounds and varied occupations (from school teachers to chemists and college faculty) who desired to raise the stature of domestic labour. Conference participants demanded adequate compensation and funding comparable to wages and funding for agricultural and mechanical programs. Home economics funding was intended to develop extensions services (programs and activities run by home economists for home education and women's groups, to provide community support around nutrition, childcare, household management, and family economics), travelling libraries, institutes, and other agencies (American Home Economics Association, 1901).

The discipline's ideals and purpose were motivated by the desire to improve deteriorating social conditions as the effects of urbanization, industrialization, and an influx of immigration widened social disparity and began to erode the general health and well-being of many urban and rural citizens (Apple, 2015). At the ninth conference, Caroline L. Hunt (a conference participant and member of the standing Home Economics in Higher Education Committee) advocated that home economics was a tangible pathway to improve health, sanitation, working conditions for women, environmental conditions, employment prospects, and address deteriorating social conditions (Apple, 2015). In her address "Revaluations" at the third Lake Placid Conference, Hunt expressed,

Teachers of home economics hold in their power, to an almost alarming extent, the control of values. Recognizing this, they should realize the responsibility which this power entails. They should keep in mind that the world needs the most complete expressions of the life of each individual, the fullest exercise of his peculiar talent or talents. They should keep in mind that if the individual is to meet the world's demands he must have health, efficiency, opportunity. (American Home Economics Association, 1901, p. 88).

Collegial conversations over the course of the conferences were meant to create consistency across primary, secondary, and college level programs that were springing up across North America in order to achieve the moral imperatives that many home economists believed were driving the discipline (American Home Economics Association, 1901). The Lake Placid Conferences represent a time of hope and possibility as participants organized, shared, collaborated and took collective action, guiding the emergence of a discipline that was meant to improve the lives of all people but in particular was developed *by* women, *for* women as the primary caretakers of the home and its occupants. At a time when women's choices and freedoms were limited (despite small gains having been made), organizations such as Women's Institutes and the American Home Economics Association gave women an opportunity to have

agency as they organized and took steps to improve the quality of life for people (Andrews, 1998).

The Lake Placid Conferences are critical because they represent the start of a tremendous period of growth for home economics, made all the more relevant as a response to social concerns of the time. Throughout the ten conferences held over nine years (between 1899-1908), participants worked to frame the academic field and the practice, as well as deciding on a suitable name for the discipline (Nickols & Collier, 2015). The Lake Placid Conferences are often revisited as home economists in the present debate the implications of changes to nomenclature as a means to emphasize the relevancy of the discipline through processes of rebranding (IFHE Think Tank Committee, 2018). Changes to the name of the discipline are ongoing, lending itself to the variety of names in home economics and related programs around the world. Currently, home economics in Saskatchewan is also undergoing a process of rebranding. Smith and de Zwart (2010) document the wide scope of home economics nomenclature across Canada which is indicative of home economics practitioners engaging in dialogue to choose a name that best suits local contexts and understandings. However, a think tank undertaken by the International Federation for Home Economics asserts, that in general, rebranding efforts are unlikely to yield the desired result since understandings of the discipline are entrenched in pre-existing public perceptions that are difficult to change (IFHE, 2018). With the IFHE think tank's findings in mind, home economics in Saskatchewan might shift away from current nomenclature debates towards renewal processes, by looking to the founding Lake Placid Conferences to inform the present. By emphasizing what home economics can do to improve society as opposed to debating the connotations and implications of nomenclature, the discipline can take important steps to improve human and environmental conditions. Orienting the discipline to support sustainability issues and teaching individuals, families, and communities to



lessen their negative impact on the environment is a way that the discipline can equip people to live in the current social conditions in Saskatchewan, Canada, and globally. Repositioning the field in Saskatchewan will increase the relevancy of home economics in the province as it supports individuals, families, and communities to live in challenging times under threat of ecological and social injustices.

### **The Nomenclature Debate**

The evolution and development of home economics is worth examining as a structure or series of strategies that women used to expand their opportunities towards gender equity. Stage (1997) explains, “The move from social settlements to social work is the most documented of the trends toward female gendered professionalism” (p. 3). From the 1900s to the 1960s, the discipline emerged from the private into the public sphere, becoming one of the primary avenues for educated women to find employment in academia and business (Stage, 1997). Home economics became a parallel career track developed *by* women, *for* women, as they were shut out of employment in most male professions (Stage, 1997). Processes of professionalization of the discipline occurred as women sought to upgrade, and standardize their jobs as a way to legitimize their work and compete for jobs and resources (Stage, 1997). Ellen Sparrow Richards (a prominent founder of home economics) initiated the Lake Placid conferences to professionalize the discipline as a way to gain academic acceptance (Stage, 1997). Richards was propelled by the rejection of M. Carey Thomas (president of Bryn Mawr College) in 1893, who felt that home economics was too sex stereotyped to develop a program that could match the rigors of male Ivy League colleges (Stage, 1997). Thomas thought home economics was too bound in the public perception with an emphasis on household skills and cookery, and not academic (Stage, 1997).

The first Lake Placid conference in 1899 focused on the difficult task of finding a name for the discipline (Stage, 1997). Stage (1997) explains, “This struggle for definition bears close scrutiny as we seek to understand the nature of home economics and how it sheds light on the intersection of gender and professionalism” (p. 5). Each potential name indicated different goals and emphases for the trajectory the discipline would take (Stage, 1997). Some participants viewed the discipline as sociological and economic, some as a science, and some framed it around traditional women’s domestic duties (Stage, 1997). Different monikers borrowed from courses being taught across the United States were considered to name the discipline including domestic science, household arts, home science, and household economics (Nickols & Collier, 2015). Household arts tied the discipline to skills-based, manual training in cooking programs and schools popularized by Fannie Farmer in Boston. Domestic economy was rooted in a Christian ethos, borrowed from Catherine Beecher’s (1977) manual *A Treatise on Domestic Economy*, written in 1841, that served as a basis for early home economics curricula. Beecher’s manual was focused on addressing the “servant problem” emerging in the 1880s and 1890s as middle- and upper-class women had difficulty finding paid help as immigration patterns shifted (Stage, 1997). Activities in her book on domestic economy included upgrading domestic work, improving training for immigrant girls, and connecting employers and domestic servants seeking work (Stage, 1997). Richards advocated for the use of the term domestic science as it connected the kitchen and the chemistry lab with a focus on nutrition and sanitation (Stage, 1997). As a chemist educated at Vassar and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Richards’ focus was on creating a link between domesticity and science, motivated by a desire to move women trained in science into employment in academia and industry, and develop women in positions of leadership within the discipline (Stage, 1997). The name *home economics* was ultimately chosen, borrowing perspectives from the social sciences, positioning, “...the home in relation to

the larger polity, encouraging reform and municipal housekeeping” (Stage, 1997, p. 5). The name was a compromise to appease groups of participants with varying ideologies by tying the concept of the home as women’s traditional sphere to the prestige of the emerging social sciences (Stage, 1997).

Branding the discipline as “home economics” did not satisfy all conference participants as evidenced by the formation of a committee on nomenclature who would search for a more desirable term over the next ten years (Stage, 1997). In particular, Richards took issue with the name and substituted alternatives that were not widely adopted by her colleagues after the name home economics was chosen (Stage, 1997). However, this was also part of a larger strategy towards gender equity. Flexibility in nomenclature allowed for adjustments based on the political positioning of her audience as Richards advanced her goal of getting home economics programs into elite eastern women’s colleges (Stage, 1997).

Rowles (1964) credited Richards with promoting the naming of the field as *euthenics*, or the science of the controlled environment as applied to the community, school, factory, and the home. This theory has traction with the emphasis placed on science by home economics in the early years (Nickols & Collier 2015, Rowles, 1964). However, it is essential to remember that an emphasis on science was typical of many facets of life and education at this time, as a response to industrialization, and the mechanization of labour (Sager, 2007). Furthermore, a connection to science presented a pathway to provide women with opportunity in academia and business (Stage, 1997). Rowles (1964) asserts that some have incorrectly equated home economics as *euthenics*, the study of improving human functioning and well-being through the improvement of living conditions, simply because Richards coined the term. Rowles (1964) argued for a distinction to be made between euthenics, with an inter-relational approach to community, and home economics, as the practice of home-making. In contrast, many

contemporary home economics researchers understand the discipline as a complex set of dynamics between home, local, and global communities, and their intersections with social, economic, political, technological, and natural environments. Constantakos (1984, as cited in Peterat, 2001) argues that Richards put forth the title *oekology* which she understood to mean the science of the home and was focused on questions of right living. Richards's focus on right living denotes a strong moral component to the teaching of home economics which would be based around white, middle-class ethos. Ultimately, attendees of the conference decided to name the discipline home economics (from the root *oikonomia*) to be used at both the school and college level (Nickols & Collier, 2015; Peterat, 2001, Rowles, 1964). In 1909, the American Home Economics Association came into being, also adopting the name home economics to be used in academic and school settings (Rowles, 1964). Richards came to accept the name and presided over future home economics conferences, bearing in mind the goal of getting home economics curricula into elite eastern women's colleges (Stage, 1997). Stage (1997) opines that, "...home economists proved willing to trade on traditional views of women's place—to use traditional terms to cloak untraditional activities" (p. 9).

Perhaps part of a larger semantic debate, Peterat (2001) argues that *oikonomia* spawned the words *economy* and *ecology* with two separate identities. Nickols and Collier (2015) assert that initially the aims of ecology and economics were conjoined in the identity of home economists which can be traced to the first conference proceedings in 1899, where participants outlined that domestic economy be taught to younger students, domestic science for high school students, and household/home economics at the college/university level. The divergence of ecology and economics occurred before the name home economics was chosen to represent the field. Nickols and Collier (2015) trace *oekology* to the development of the word *ecology* emphasizing the human-environment relationship. The word "economy" is derived from the

Greek words *oikos* (house) and *nemein* (to manage). The words “home economics” actually are redundant when *oikonomia* is literally translated (Nickols & Collier, 2015, p. 15). Stage (1997) argues that Richards adopted the term *ecology* (after oekology, and euthenics) and the use of the term gained support with some home economists, driving the divergence between those in support of human ecology as the preferred nomenclature and those satisfied with the name home economics. Nickols and Collier (2015) argue that the divergence of ecology and economics occurred before the name home economics was chosen to represent the field. Regardless, dissent with the chosen name of home economics occurred and was made visible through the nomenclature committee the rebranding of several prominent home economics colleges to use the name *human ecology* throughout the 1960s and 1970s, including the College of Home Economics at Cornell University (Stage, 1997). Both monikers (home economics and human ecology) are used to refer to different home economics programs across Canada today (Smith & de Zwart, 2010), although ‘home economics’ is the term used in Saskatchewan.

Adelaide Hoodless, the National YWCA president and treasurer for the Canadian National Council of Women who is credited with starting the first class in domestic science in Canada, only served to complicate the field further (Crowley, 1986). Hoodless contributed to the murkiness of the home economics nomenclature debate by using three separate terms (Rowles, 1964). Hoodless used household science to describe home economics taught in post-secondary settings, domestic science was the term used for its application in a school setting, and domestic economy was used sparingly in her recruitment and advocacy talks to convey the multidisciplinary opportunities within the subject (Rowles, 1964). Crowley (1986) opines that Adelaide Hoodless latched on to the scientific pedagogical approach for the teaching of home economics because the popular view of the application of physical scientific principles and methodology could be seen as raising the stature of the discipline and its practitioners.

On a national and international scale, home economics has historically devoted much time and energy to choosing a name that communicates its brand. Home economics nomenclature is important because programs and names have diverged along with perceptions of what *ought* to be the purpose of the field (Rowles, 1964; Smith & de Zwart, 2010). In two meetings of the executive council of the Saskatchewan Home Economics Teachers' Association (SHETA), several of my peers have argued that social and ecological justice are not issues of home economics in the past or the present. A historical analysis of the development of home economics reveals that there is space for the pursuit of social and ecological justice as a pathway to improve the well-being of individuals, families, and communities. A common understanding of the foundational objectives of home economics and its development, may influence the extent to which home economics teachers in Saskatchewan are willing to make a space for a critical social and ecological pedagogical framework for the teaching of home economics in the province.

### **Shifting the Conversation**

In a contemporary timeframe, nomenclature has persisted as a central talking point within the profession. Smith and deZwart (2010) explain the range of home economics nomenclature in use across Canada including home economics, human ecology, and family studies. At the University of Saskatchewan, notes from the binder of former College of Home Economics Dean, Gwenna Moss (1983), reveal one such exhaustive exploration of the implications of a name change for the College of Home Economics. These notes reveal the consideration of a name change in conjunction with curricular programming adjustments. Curricular adjustments were meant to strengthen the legitimacy of the program through the inclusion of more science courses (Moss, 1983). While this recommendation is consistent with the heavy emphasis on empirical

research methods applied in various colleges throughout the time period, it is problematic in areas of home economics that defy quantification (e.g., family relationships, creative and resourceful culinary applications, and so on). Peterat (1989) points out,

From social reproduction educational theorists, we are reminded that practical “hands-on” knowledge is devalued in our society and its educational institutions, whereas abstract detached, objective knowledge is exalted. Thus, different kinds of knowledge assume different status, replicating the divisions of society. (p. 72)

In 1964, Rowles, who would become the dean of the College of Home Economics at the University of Saskatchewan from 1965-1972, cited a lack of faculty with advanced degrees, the demanding role of women within family structures, generalized undergraduate programming, and lack of funding as factors influencing the lack of research produced by most Canadian home economics programs. During a review that would ultimately lead to the closure of the College of Home Economics at the University of Saskatchewan in 1990, two memos written by faculty in 1986 to the College Review Committee, reveal that the wide breadth of content covered made it difficult to conduct research and that there was a general lack of respect from colleagues in other disciplines across campus as a result of this poor performance in research (Crowle, 1986; Olson, 1986).

Recently, a provincial committee of educators teaching under the umbrella of Practical and Applied Arts has been formed to oversee the revision of a Practical and Applied Arts Handbook, to revisit nomenclature of specific subjects and individual curricula, and to consult with the Ministry of Education with regards to processes of curricula renewal (Arnold Neufeld, personal communication, January 7, 2018). Practical and Applied Arts in Saskatchewan is comprised of six disciplines including: industrial arts, career and work education, computer science, visual and theatre arts, and home economics and hospitality. Of twenty-three committee members, there is one home economist on the committee (Anna Lee Parnetta, personal

communication, March 27, 2019). Eleven of 38 curricula under the Practical and Applied Arts umbrella are designated home economics curricula with overlap of several curricula (i.e. commercial cooking) under the trades sections also being taught by home economists across the province (see Saskatchewan Education 2000, 1999a, 1999b).

The Saskatchewan Practical and Applied Arts Reference Committee is reconsidering names for specific home economics curricula with the addition of Food Sustainability/Production to the Agriculture section in the Practical and Applied Arts subject area (Arnold Neufeld, personal communication, January 7, 2018). Potential complications include the isolation of sustainability and production in the agriculture curriculum, possibly at the expense of current Food Studies curricula, which are more widely taught throughout the province. Addressing issues of sustainability, production, and agriculture (where food comes from, and how it is produced) is an essential part of a foods program. Furthermore, embedding this knowledge within foods curricula rather than an agriculture-centered curriculum, makes it more widely accessible and exposes students to important discourses on sustainable food systems and sustainable living. In addition to these alternations, the Practical and Applied Arts Reference Committee is revisiting a change in nomenclature — once again, diverting precious resources, time, and energy of professionals in the field without taking into account research explaining the value of maintaining the developed brand name of home economics already in use.

Home economists recognize the importance of branding (likely in part to its connections to marketing and consumer culture), to communicate an organization's reputation, values, and character, which affects how people interact and perceive a given brand (IFHE Thinktank, 2013). However, in a global content analysis conducted by the International Federation of Home Economics Think Tank (2013), it was revealed that rebranding and repositioning the field could help ensure the longevity of the subject, but that renaming home



economics would be detrimental: “Brand equity is the added value that a brand is given beyond the functionality benefits it provides, and this is developed over a long period of time. ‘Home Economics’ would lose recognition if its name was to change, and as a result would lose the brand equity it has accrued over more than 100 years” (IFHE Think Tank, 2018, p. 204). Thus, while home economics conveys a plethora of beliefs and values its name is in fact an essential part of conveying meaning to its clientele. Peterat (2001) offers that names in and of themselves do not hold meaning, but rather meaning is ascribed through the process of our construction and sometimes reconstruction of our identities through them. In other words, we give names meaning as they give meaning to us (Peterat, 2001). My view is that home economists in Saskatchewan would be better off considering how we might reconstruct our identity to maximize relevance in relation to social and ecological justice frameworks using our existing name. To maximize the efforts of a community who cares deeply about their profession, the target of home economists in Saskatchewan might shift towards *what* and *how* we teach rather than what we call ourselves.

Regardless of nomenclature, there is a case to be made for home economics being both concerned with issues of household management as well as the human-environment relationship. de Zwart (2003) looks to Vaines (1981) who did extensive research on the Lake Placid Conferences, to show that one of the underlying foundations from the inception of home economics as a discipline has been a discussion on how home economists can translate home economics knowledge into professional practice or human service (p. 32). Apple (2015) points to a document published in 1913 by the Committee on Nomenclature and Syllabus from the American Home Economics Association. The syllabus encouraged women to better their communities, evidenced by repeatedly highlighting the interdependence between individuals, families, and community responsibility through good citizenship (Apple, 2015). Apple (2015) argues that the sense of social responsibility waned over time as the discipline shifted from a

sense of community responsibility towards an individualistic focus on self and family that emphasized vocational preparation, leading to the division of the discipline into specialized subjects (p. 57). Nickols and Collier (2015) assert that the purpose of home economics in the present encompasses the aims of the roots of both home economics and household economy with a focus on the household comprised of individuals and families and their interaction with natural, material and social environments. Peterat (2001) also emphasizes that the way forward for home economics means finding a balance between home economics and household ecology — a statement worthy of consideration for Saskatchewan home economists as we continue to advance the field in our province.

Home economics programs continually revisit issues of nomenclature, perhaps as a response to insecurities about the legitimacy of the field. Concerns around proving the worth of home economics could also be rooted in the struggle home economists have had throughout history to have domestic science recognized as an academic pursuit worthy of study in post-secondary institutions. From fierce advocacy through women's groups to develop the first home economics programs in Saskatchewan, to the continual fights against budget cuts, and the splintering of programs with fragments absorbed by other colleges, home economists seem to spend a lot of energy and time defending the subject's worth. A preoccupation with nomenclature to set a course for development of the field detracts from advancing important discourse within the field that demands immediate attention, such as issues of social and ecological justice. Rowles (1964) explained,

To drop the use of the term "home economics" would cause irreparable damage to an important professional group. It would be particularly unfortunate to dismember this group at a time when society is so much in need of the professional services of the home economist. Would it not be better to create a true public image of the present-day meaning of the terms home economics and home economist?...New terms should be used at the vocational level, terms such as "Consumer Education" and "Education for Homemaking", but the

teachers of these subjects would still be home economists. What better name could they have? (p. 5-6)

### **The Birth of Home Economics**

An understanding of how the discipline of home economics developed may elucidate why nomenclature debates persist in the present. Home economics emerged in North America and Europe within technical institutes, colleges and universities during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (College of Home Economics, 2007-2008; Keating, 2001; Wilson, 2007). The emergence of sewing programs in schools as early as 1835, and cooking programs several decades later, illustrates that originally the subjects were independent of each other, unified only by their categorization as “women’s work” (Rowles, 1964, p. 2). Rowles (1964) noted that sewing was considered a domestic art, whereas cooking was considered a domestic science. The development of both subjects is essential because it may be the origin of the common misperception of home economics as “just” sewing and cooking. It provides a background to the desire of home economists to unify programs and organize classes intended for an audience of women that were previously independent of each other. The early 1870s saw the development of formalized home economics schooling including a school of domestic science and art at the Illinois University in 1871, and a course in domestic economy by Iowa State University in 1874 (Rowles, 1964). The 1880s marked the introduction of domestic science as a school subject in the United States (sewing as early as 1835, and cooking in the 1850s) (Rowles, 1964). In the early 1890s, Columbia University expanded to offer domestic science as well as domestic arts through the teacher’s college (Nickols & Collier, 2015). In 1896, New York State required a household science examination for women’s college entrance, illustrating the growing value of the subject area to academia, the school system, and society as a whole (Nickols & Collier, 2015).

Home economics programs evolved out of land grant<sup>3</sup> colleges to train rural women to address household nutrition and sanitation issues, and to promote self-sufficiency through labour training for both lower-class African Americans, and other women in targeted areas of the United States (Nickols & Collier, 2015). Nickols and Collier's (2015) explanation of the development of home economics programs emphasizes the purpose of programming to promote self-sufficiency, glossing over issues of class and race disparity embedded in work once left to the lower-working class and racialized minority groups. The promotion of self-sufficiency implies a positive approach to labour training and masks the desire and motivation of many middle-class white women to develop formal home economics programs to train domestic servants for hire from a labour pool of marginalized people (mostly women).

Curricula for early courses were inspired by Beecher's (1841/1977) manual first published in 1841 which included the study of food, clothing, home management, personal relationships, home care of the sick, and domestic economy (Rowles, 1964). Beecher's book is largely anecdotal, deriving knowledge of running a household from her own experience of raising siblings after the death of her mother, as well as the experiences of others (including her sister's experiences with motherhood). Beecher's work illustrates a pervasive moral imperative steeped in religious sentiment, consistent with the experience of middle-class white women of the time. Imbued with value judgements regarding the "right way" to care for infants, rear children, remove a stain from muslin, or develop the proper temperament and tone, Beecher's book is a cultural artifact, reflecting her station of privilege in society as well as that of her readers (Kish Sklar, 1977).

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<sup>3</sup> Land-grant universities were established across the United States funded by the Morrill Act in 1862 to meet industrial demands for scientifically trained specialists in agriculture and mechanical arts (Johnson, 1981). There are no Canadian universities equivalent to US land-grant colleges although agricultural education and extension programs were established across the country from 1670-1893 (Havrylenko, 2016). The University of Saskatchewan was established in 1907 in Saskatoon in conjunction with the Faculty of Agriculture (Havrylenko, 2016), The university site was chosen for its suitability for an agricultural college with ample farmland (Havrylenko, 2016).

In 1857, Dr. Edward Youmans, a chemist, released a book entitled *The Handbook of Household Science: A popular account of Heat, Light, Air, Ailment, and Cleansing in their scientific and domestic applications*, which emphasized agents, materials, and phenomena over the study of people (Rowles, 1964). Youmans' (1857) explained the purpose of his book as an attempt to excite thought, increase interest in household phenomena, and ignite domestic improvement with a targeted audience of family and general readers, although language used is specific to the male gender and targets a male audience. Youmans (1857) observed,

The terms carbon, oxygen, nitrogen, carbonic acid, and some others, though hardly yet familiarized in popular speech, must soon become so. They are the names of substances of universal interest and importance; the chief elements of air, water, food, and organized bodies by which Providence carries on the mighty scheme of terrestrial activity and life. They are the keys to a new department of intellectual riches — the latest revelation of time respecting the conditions of human existence. The time has come when all who aspire to a character for real intelligence, must know something of the objects which these terms represent. (p. IX)

From Youmans' perspective, real knowledge was rooted in physical science rather than experience, the approach taken by Beecher (1977). Youmans (1857) and Beecher's contradictory approaches to domestic pursuits highlights the tension between present day methods used in the teaching of home economics as rooted in either the physical sciences or the social sciences. Interestingly enough, participants at the Lake Placid conferences recognized home economics as a collaboration between both approaches, making home economics particularly unique as a multidisciplinary endeavor (American Home Economics Association, 1901).

It would be interesting to correlate the influence that Beecher's (1841/1977) anecdotal manual may have had on the motivation and production of Youmans' (1857) scientific approach. Was Youmans' book an attempt to devalue Beecher's (or others like her) experiential/qualitative approach to domestic science? Youmans (1857) expressed, "The materials of the volume — the

result of laborious and life-long investigations of many **men** [emphasis added] — have been gathered from numberless sources, from standard books upon the various topics, scientific magazines, original memoirs, personal correspondence, observation, household experience and laboratory examinations.” (p. IX). While there is no evidence that suggests this statement is directed towards the work of Beecher (1977), it does highlight the fact that the knowledge and experience of women as mothers, sister, daughters, caregivers, and domestic servants was seen as having less value than the *opinions* and empirical rationale of men, in relation to the proper management of a household.

An emphasis on scientific methodologies and the physical sciences gained popularity in 1920s throughout academia, which influenced home economists as the discipline developed (Stage, 1997). Many home economists of the past and present look to scientific methodologies to defend the legitimacy of the field because it was the normative approach to research when home economics was founded. However, areas of home economics practice such as family studies are also rooted in the social sciences. Scientific methodologies are but one aspect of the interdisciplinary nature of the field, often described as an *applied science*. Against traditional academic pedagogies, applied sciences are generally viewed as inferior (Peterat, 1989a). Home economists at the Lake Placid Conferences challenged dominant discourses of traditional science, despite the scientific method (empiricism) being the normative approach to research at the time (Peterat, 1989b). During the conferences, attendees drew similarities between chemistry and home economics. Since both relied on the practical application of knowledge in hands-on activities, the implication was that they were similar in application and methodology and therefore equal in stature (Peterat, 1989b). However, it was agreed by those in attendance that the world of academia would not accept this truth as mainstream academia would never allow such a disruption to systems of power; that is to say that an applied science rooted in domestic

labour would never be equal in status to a traditional science such as chemistry (Peterat, 1989b). It is necessary to unpack the ways in which home economics perpetuates and reinforces patriarchal, colonial, and classist ways of thinking. As a discipline borne out of the age of manuals such as the works produced by Beecher (1841/1977) and Youmans (1857) that served as a foundation to home economics programs, home economists must challenge the deeply entrenched hierarchical ideas about the worth or value of individuals embedded within these foundational documents. Further work in the field is required to decolonize home economics curricula, pedagogies, and programs.

Richards was likely heavily influenced by the male-dominated academia around her, including Youmans (1857) manual and others of its time. While Richards' knowledge and experience paved the way for home economics as a formalized discipline, it is essential to identify the limitations of predominantly scientific pedagogies within a multi-disciplinary framework: "It has always been important for the home economist to know something of the social sciences, as well as the physical sciences. In the past the physical sciences have, in most college programs, received the major portion of attention; today there is a definite demand for social sciences" (Rowles, 1964, p. 96). The strong emphasis placed on scientific pedagogy in home economics from its inception signifies the value of technology, science, and mechanization to society as it became more industrialized (Smith & de Zwart, 2010). It also demonstrates that home economists were aware of power differentials, and emphasized physical science applications of home economics in spite of its multidisciplinary nature as a way to legitimize the subject area. Looking outward for validation is a trend that has persisted through the history of the discipline and prevented home economics from turning its attention to matters of the future (Apple, 2015; Peterat, 1989b; Smith & de Zwart, 2010), particularly in Saskatchewan. The history of the Lake Placid Conferences reinforces that founding members of the discipline

embraced both sociological and scientific approaches to home economics. The trans-disciplinary nature of home economics is what makes it a distinct body of knowledge with potential to contribute unique perspectives and methods towards affecting a positive impact on the well-being of individuals, families, and communities.

### **Journey from the Lake Placid Conferences: Domestic Servants to Domestic Bliss(ers)**

In order to set a course for home economics in the present that is congruent with the underlying aims of the discipline; i.e., the betterment of individuals, families, and communities, it is essential to understand the conditions under which the founders of home economics were compelled to unify courses being taught across North America. Crowley (1986) explains how broader societal changes related to urbanization, secularization, and industrialisation altered the social and political landscape, trends which were countered by increased social advocacy and political reform that helped to advance women's status during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. Smith and de Zwart (2010) explain that women advocated for home economics education initially to improve general health and hygiene, as a mode of recognizing women's right to education and participation in society, and to promote positive relationships and values between individuals, families, and society through recognition of the primary importance of women's work in the home. Of particular import is the emergence of home economics programs, alongside changes to domestic service, divisions of labour within households, and changes to women's status in the home and society.

Historically a male-dominated profession, one third of domestic servants were male in the 1820s; however, by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, 90 percent were female (Barber, 1991). Examining the changes that occurred in domestic service from 1871-1931, Sager (2007) describes how the occupation continued to be dominated by female workers although in British Columbia, they



were predominantly Chinese or Japanese men. Sager attributes this anomaly to B.C.'s coastal location and relative proximity to Asia, and benefits that outweighed racial prejudices such as the steady supply of servants willing to work for low wages, and their ability to perform laborious tasks (Sager, 2007). Domestic service jobs were often temporary in the life of a young woman, until marriage or transitioning to clerical or educational work for better pay lured her away. By 1901 most domestic servants were [white] literate, young Canadian women who had completed compulsory schooling (Sager, 2007, pp. 523). Canadian homes typically employed only one domestic servant per household, unlike multi-servant households in Europe (Sager, 2007). Over 1871-1931, the profile of the domestic servant changed from persons with immigrant status to women with Canadian ancestry (Sager, 2007).

As the profile of the domestic servant in Canada shifted during this time period, so did the profile of the employer. In 1871, households with a diverse range of socioeconomic status could access the services of domestic servants (Sager, 2007). Social life was altered as large numbers of workers flocked to cities for long-term, wage-earning work in factories in high density urban centers with poor working conditions and sanitation (Anastakis, 2017). However, by 1901, only elite families working in merchant, manufacturing, professional, and government official types of employment were able to employ servants (Sager, 2007). This change in who could afford to employ a domestic servant could be attributed to a widening economic gap between classes as agricultural industries and a mercantile economic system shifted into an industrial, capitalist economic system.

At one time, a job in domestic service provided a young woman with a means of independence as well as the elevation of her status (Sager, 2007). As the growth of agriculture spread west across Canada, young white women tended to contribute to the family unit by staying home and participating in unpaid labour, the result of which was a reduction in the labour

pool for elite employers (Sylvester, 2001 as cited in Sager, 2007). The elite expected a labour pool of employees who shared the same religion and ancestry, were compliant, and who would work long hours for low wages (Sager, 2007). Exploitative working conditions and rigid cultural and religious expectations contributed to the growing trend for young rural women to stay with their families and participate in unpaid labour. Employers wanting more from their domestic servants fought labour reform and movements to professionalize the occupation, instead fighting for the inclusion of domestic science and housework training in the school curriculum (Barber, 1980 as cited in Sager, 2007). The shift towards helping on the family farm created a “servant problem”, or a lack of trained domestic servants to meet demand (Sager, 2007).

Barber (1991) reveals Canadian class bias as she explains how white, European immigrants were funneled into a profession increasingly shunned by Canadian-born, white-working class women as better paying jobs in factories or offices became available to them. Barber (1991) argues that the demographic makeup of Canadian domestic servants was bound to broad patterns of immigration; most domestic servants were immigrants from European countries of origin supported by Canadian immigration policies such as England, Ireland, and Scotland. Sager (2007) notes that Canadian employers preferred domestic servants who shared similar ancestry; a sentiment supported by racist immigration policies discussed by Mathieu (2010) that favoured white migrants from America and European countries such as England, Norway, Sweden, Hungary, Russia, Italy, while limiting migration from Japan, and the West Indies.

In the United States, many black women worked as domestic servants for former slave-owners (Mathieu, 2010). The elimination of slavery in British North America in 1834, emancipated slaves from unpaid domestic servitude, although pervasive racism after the civil war left many without options for employment other than domestic service (Barber, 1991).

Unlike the United States where black women were the main source to supplement domestic labour either as slaves or servants, Canadian domestic service became associated with white immigrant women after the 1820s (Barber, 1991). Selective immigration policies also inhibited the entry of black people from the United States seeking refuge from on-going racism after the civil war (Barber, 1991). Mathieu (2010) identifies xenophobic immigration policies heavily targeting the regulation of black migration into Canada, as a defining feature of the political landscape of the time. The Immigration Act of 1906 and an order-in council signed by Sir Laurier in 1911 prohibiting black immigration, singled out: "...a racial group for unqualified exclusion, codified white paranoia into federal law, and earned the Department of Immigration the dubious distinction of being the first federal government branch to institute a nationally implemented Jim Crow law in Canada" (Mathieu, 2010, pp. 57). Thus, the history of domestic service in Canada exposes deeply entrenched racism from Canadian settlers/employees, supported by government policies.

For example, the Department of Indian Affairs allowed for the exploitation of a captive labour pool: Indigenous girls. Drawing on the domestic training received at Industrial schools. Indigenous girls were exploited to meet labour demands for domestic servants in rural areas. Until recently, gender and labour historians have ignored the role of Indigenous women in domestic service, who were funneled through Industrial schools and hired out in what was known as the *outing system* (Nason, 2019). The contributions of Indigenous women in meeting the labour demands for domestic service are often overlooked by traditional historians, "...in part from a broader trend in Canadian history writing to dissociate Canadian history from its colonial past" (McCallum, 2014, The State, par. 1). Nason (2019) explains,

As the requirement for domestic workers grew in western Canada, so did the demand for Indigenous girls who were students of the industrial schools. The need for domestic workers became an ideal situation for government officials and school administrators who believed the ideology at the time that young people from "problem populations"

could be reformed through appropriate education and labour. The schools, then, became an environment which girls worked as labourers in the school, thus preparing them to be domestic workers as part of the outing system. What began as an effort to assimilate youth into Euro-Canadian society eventually became a form of exploitation. (p. 46)

The outing system was an extension of vocational training in Industrial schools — predating residential schools — developed in the 1880s to assimilate Indigenous students into the lower ranks of Canadian society through entry into hierarchal systems of labour (Nason, 2019, p. 1).

Examining the period between 1888-1901, Nason (2019) argues that a desperate need for farm workers in the prairies amidst the labour shortage led to the establishment of an Indigenous labour force that evolved from domestic training at Industrial schools. This period predates the establishment of the first school of home economics in Canada. Before the outing system, industrial schools trained Indigenous girls using the ‘half-day system’ where mornings were spent in the classroom and afternoons were spent doing manual labour and domestic service as a form of assimilation and labour training (Nason, 2019; McCallum 2014). The original intent of vocational training for Indigenous girls was meant to provide the unpaid, trained labour needed to maintain operations of industrial schools, and provide assistance in the homes of local clergy, health workers, and settlers (Nason, 2019; McCallum 2014). Vocational training was also intended to assimilate Indigenous women from their cultural and familial systems, instead exposing them to Euro-Canadian values and gendered divisions of labour (Nason, 2019; McCallum 2014). However, the labour shortage provided an opportunity to further exploit Indigenous girls, keeping them from their families for longer periods of time after graduation in conditions that were often lonely, isolating, and often violent (Nason, 2019). While not all experiences in domestic servitude were negative, Indigenous girls, women, and their families did not have autonomy to opt in to the ‘outing’ system (Nason, 2014).

Hayter Reed — an Indian Agent from the Department of Indian Affairs, assigned to the Battleford district in Saskatchewan — is responsible of the establishment of the outing system in

Western Canada (Nason, 2019). Heavily influenced by similar outing systems in the United States, the prairie model had students engaged in underpaid labour in settler homes and farms to provide hands-on experiences, and reinforce the status quo of settler identity/life (Nason, 2019). Industrial schools saved money by not having to clothe, feed, or house Indigenous students who were hired out (Nason, 2019). Student wages were managed by principals of the schools who would deposit the money in bank accounts for the students to help them get established after graduation (Nason, 2019). Often, wages were given to students' parents as a tactic to maintain consent and support for the hiring out of their children, despite persistent resistance from families (Nason, 2019). While domestic service in Canada is often associated with immigrant women during the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the contribution of Indigenous women as domestic servants in the prairies is often overlooked (Nason, 2019, McCallum, 2014). By the time period between 1920-1940, as many as 36 to 57 percent of Indigenous women participated in the domestic service labour market (McCallum, 2014). Outside of institutional contexts when domestic work was a choice, it was only one part of a complex economic system that included a variety of wage-earning labour (McCallum, 2014). If home economics is to improve societal sustainability practices and the lives of individuals, families, and communities, it must seek to recognize and reconcile the tensions within the field, acknowledging its role in the ongoing colonial project, in order to guide future practice. A lack of ethnocultural diversity and rootedness in colonial aspirations are limitations of home economics that its practitioners must address in their efforts to revitalize and develop relevant curriculum and pedagogy that is more inclusive and culturally appropriate.

It is important to point out that the motivation driving domestic training began as a response to a labour shortage that negatively affected white middle-class women. The privilege of employing a domestic servant allowed middle-class white women the freedom to participate

in women's organizations and social reformation (Barber, 1991). Furthermore, the foundations of the profession were shaped by the knowledge and experience of white middle-class women at the Lake Placid Conferences, as well as the various middle-class women who championed for the subject areas to be taught in their respective provinces across Canada. Adelaide Hoodless, a driving force behind the home economics movement in Canada, and Lady Aberdeen, founder of the National Council of Women, both pushed for the inclusion of domestic science in schools on behalf of other white, elite women as an answer to their "servant problem" (Crowley, 1986; Griffiths, 1993; Sager, 2007).

However, Hoodless motivation was not singular. She was partly driven to promote domestic science by the loss of her son to a preventable domestic sanitation issue (Crowley, 1986). Crowley (1986) also suggests that Hoodless' thoughts around the promotion of domestic science were, "...embedded in gender and class perceptions that provided middle-class women with a new sense of self-esteem" (p. 528). Hoodless' motivation and underlying passion for domestic science was partly rooted in a desire to elevate the status of domestic work rather than promoting the outsourcing of that work to domestic servants. Home economics as a discipline of study, emerged as a response to the reduced availability of domestic servants trained in household management and maintenance by providing training to lower-class women without other employment options. In addition, home economics programs also developed to provide training to housewives whose household responsibilities increased with the scarcity of domestic servants in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The decline of the domestic servant brought about a pivotal societal paradigm shift, where labour that had once been recognized as having value as part of wage-earning occupation within a market economy was, "...transferred to an invisible and unpaid servant-the housewife" (Sager, 2007, p. 531). Contextualizing the events that led to the "servant problem" and the

changes that developed as domestic work became highly gendered are important because they lend to an understanding of how domestic work came to be devalued in society. As domestic service became an occupation of the past, mechanized household appliances took their place as a means to make the domestic duties of housewives easier (Sager, 2007). The shift away from domestic service towards a reliance on mechanized appliances targeted housewives as a distinct consumer group (Goldstein, 2012). These changes to household domestic work contributed to household dependency on market economies for goods and services (Giles, 2007; Goldstein, 2012). Housewives became a target market group for corporations and home economists had a role to play in developing a consumer culture that arose from product testing, development, and promotion (Goldstein, 2012).

Sager (2007) asserts that the introduction of machines as a replacement for the domestic servant masks the skill and knowledge embedded in domestic labour, and that the decline of the domestic servant led to the ideology that domestic work is not a form of production but one of reproduction (Sager, 2007). Sager (2007) concludes, “Efforts to liberate women from domestic drudgery led, in an ironic twist of the class-gender nexus, to the devaluation of household work and new forms of domestic confinement” (p. 531). Consequently, home economics has been similarly situated as inferior in institutional hierarchies through its association with domestic work, and emphasis on trades-based production. Recognizing the ways in which home economics has been an agent of oppression while also being marginalized lends itself to an understanding of the development of the discipline in Saskatchewan in contrast to its evolution on a national and international scale.

## Implications

The 2016 Census of Canada reported that 70.9 percent of Saskatchewan's population is of European descent with countries of origin including Germany (27.7 percent), England (23.7 percent), Scotland (18.1 percent), Ireland (14.5 percent), Ukraine (13.4 percent), France (11.7 percent), Norway (6.4 percent), and Poland (5.6 percent) (Statistics Canada, 2016). In 2016, 10.8 percent of the population was a visible minority (defined as non-Indigenous people who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in color) (Statistics Canada, 2016). The most populous visible minorities in Saskatchewan include Filipino, Chinese, South-East Asian, and Black (Statistics Canada, 2016). In Saskatchewan, 42.5 percent of visible minorities reside in Saskatoon, while 35.6 percent reside in Regina (Statistics Canada, 2016). 16.3 percent of people in Saskatchewan self-identify as Indigenous: 10.7 percent as First Nations and 5.4 percent as Metis (Statistics Canada 2016). Slightly less than half — 47.5 percent — of First Nations live on reserve. While there is no available information regarding the demographic makeup of home economists in Saskatchewan, it is likely that a majority of practitioners are also largely of European descent, based on the profile of its two major organizations. The Association of Saskatchewan Home Economists (ASHE) members are alumni of the College of Home Economics while SHETA members are mainly composed of home economics teachers from the Home Economics Teacher Education Program in the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan. Most SHETA members are actively employed in the area of home economics throughout Saskatchewan schools. Current Saskatchewan demographic information illustrates that we are living in a predominantly white-settler society. Rural areas are less ethnoculturally diverse spaces than urban centers. Without a conscious attempt to disrupt colonial approaches to home economics pedagogy, and curricula, the discipline is at risk of impeding its goal of improving the lives of *all* individuals, families, and communities.



Many of Canada's Indigenous people are living in conditions of poverty, a situation that was the subject of rebuke by the United Nations Human Rights Committee in 2013 and 2018 (see United Nations Human Rights Committee, 2015). Many Indigenous people are food insecure, lack access to clean drinking water and basic needs, are over-represented in the prison system, and experience a disproportionate amount of violence. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission found that vocational training was used in residential schools as a form of cheap labour rather than providing skills to support and transition students into positions of paid employment (Miller, 2018). The implementation of domestic training in residential schools (many in Saskatchewan) to assimilate Indigenous girls and disrupt their cultural and spiritual knowledge has been sparsely documented (Miller, 2018), particularly in home economics literature. As a forerunner of home economics, the use of domestic training to assimilate Indigenous girls curtailed other educational subjects and likely limited vocational aspirations, contributing to the homogenous makeup of home economists in Saskatchewan.

The World Health Organization (WHO) (2016) reports that, "Climate change affects social and environmental determinants of health — clean air, safe drinking water, sufficient food and secure shelter". Those most vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change include children and the elderly, those living on islands, coastal regions, and in megacities, and especially those in developing countries. However, a recent report produced by the Canadian government reveals that projected warming for Canada is almost double that of the global average (Bush & Lemmen, 2019). As a marginalized group, Canada's Indigenous peoples will likely suffer a brunt of the negative impacts of climate change on our province and within our country. Carrying the burden of intergenerational trauma caused by processes of colonization and perpetuated by white-settler governments and society, home economists in Saskatchewan have a responsibility to decolonize home economics and address historical power differentials

through anti-oppressive, anti-racist pedagogies and curricula that are inclusive and culturally appropriate.

It is possible that social and ecological justice are not at the forefront of dialogue amongst Saskatchewan home economists because they do not perceive it as directly affecting them. Historically, home economics has close ties to agriculture. Currently, important industries to Saskatchewan's economy include mining, agriculture, forestry, and energy, that contribute to pollution through industrial processes. With the current conservative political landscape in the province, an economy tied to pollution-producing industries, and a lack of ethnocultural diversity, there is not much motivation to disrupt dominant systems of power when they benefit the majority of citizens in Saskatchewan. Home economics must begin to unpack its past in order to rebuild the discipline to make it accessible and relevant to *all* people, rather than the majority that currently benefit from maintaining structural and institutional systems of power and oppression. Looking back to the Lake Placid Conferences can help home economists take stock of the original intentions for the purpose of the discipline held by its founders, acknowledge and attempt to reconcile its role in processes of colonization, and set a course for the future that improves the lives of all individuals, families, and communities, rather than some.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **THE DEVELOPMENT OF HOME ECONOMICS WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO CANADA AND SASKATCHEWAN**

The Lake Placid Conferences marked a period of tremendous growth for home economics, starting at the turn of the nineteenth century. In the Canadian context, home economics rose in stature and popularity due in part to women like Adelaide Hoodless, who built on the work of their American counterparts and lobbied to make the subject part of the general school curriculum, and secured funding for formalized home economics programs (Smith & de Zwart, 2010). Evolving social, economic, and political conditions have shifted the role that home economics plays in post-secondary institutions despite remaining a popular subject with high enrollment in schools (Smith & de Zwart, 2010). Currently in a state of decline on a global scale, the discipline is struggling to survive amidst cuts to funding, the reduction/dismantling/restructuring of existing home economics programs in universities and colleges, shortages of home economics teachers and reductions to home economics programming (Smith & de Zwart, 2010). Shortages of trained home economics teachers as noted by studies conducted in Asia, Africa, Europe, the United States, South America, Central America, and Canada imply that there is demand for the subject area to be taught as a school subject and that reductions to home economics teacher education preparatory programs are contributing to the shortage (Smith & de Zwart, 2010). Understanding the development of home economics nationally and provincially is an essential retrospective exercise to recognize and pay homage to a dedicated group of former faculty and alumni of the College of Home Economics that have guided, developed, and defended the discipline for so long. In addition, historical analysis of home economics history illuminates the development of a critical social and ecological justice

pedagogy of home economics as a pathway towards improving the well-being of individuals, families, and communities.

Post-secondary home economics programming in Saskatchewan is at a crisis point as courses have been systematically reduced and restructured into other colleges and programs. Starting with a lengthy review process at the University of Saskatchewan in the mid-1980s that resulted in the closure of the College of Home Economics in 1990, the dismantling of the home economics teacher education program in 2016, and no enrollment in the home economics certificate program as of 2019/2020, home economics in Saskatchewan is in danger of becoming a relic of the past. Despite a global decline of home economics post-secondary programs, some have managed to continue operations through innovative delivery options (i.e. distance education). The current certificate program at the University of Saskatchewan has been placed on the College of Education's strategic enrolment plan, with the goal of increasing the number of students (Michelle Prytula, Dean of College of Education, personal communication, February 21, 2019). There are currently no students enrolled in the program (Jay Wilson, personal communication, May 12, 2020). Understanding the development of home economics may reveal factors leading to its decline, and highlight possibilities towards revitalization of the discipline through a critical social and ecological pedagogy of home economics.

### **The Development of Home Economics in Canada**

After running a successful series of classes out of the Hamilton YWCA starting in 1894, inadequate facilities and a lack of funding led to a partnership between Adelaide Hoodless, James Mills, the president of the Ontario Agricultural College, and William MacDonald, a wealthy philanthropist in the tobacco industry (Crowley 1986). Together the trio opened the first school of domestic science in Guelph, Ontario, in 1903 (Crowley, 1986). The school was named

the MacDonald Institute and was borne out of Mills interest in rural modernization, with the domestic science school supporting the nationally lagging agricultural community through the application of science and technology to increase the efficiency of rural life and agriculture (Ambrose and Kechnie, 1999; Crowley, 1986). Thus, home economics programs in Canada were borne out of relationships with institutional and industrial backing in what was assumed to be mutually beneficial for both. Hoodless was a key figure in Canadian home economics history, advocating for the inclusion of home economics into the school curriculum, resulting in a demand for trained teachers of home economics which spread across the country (Crowley, 1986).

Hoodless was also a key figure in the formation of Women's Institute's (WI's), supported by the Ontario Department of Agriculture (Ambrose and Kechnie, 1999). Women's Institutes and Home Economics programs were closely tied as both served to support and promote the other (Crowley, 1986; Rowles, 1964). The first WI started in Stoney Creek, Ontario in 1897, (Andrews, 1998). In 1911, an advisory board of women from WI's was appointed to the Department of Agriculture in British Columbia, illustrating the close ties of the organization to government (Andrews, 1998). By 1913 variations existed across America and Europe (Andrews, 1998). For Hoodless, the Women's Institutes were essential conduits to advertise and promote her program to a conservative farming population (Ambrose and Kechnie, 1999). Hoodless was heavily influenced by her American counterparts evidenced by her references to the work of educational philosophers Herbert Spencer and John Dewey in their support of the value of practical, hands-on learning experiences, ultimately strengthening the case for the formalization of home economics programming in Canada (Crowley, 1986; Nickols & Collier, 2015, Rowles 1964). Hoodless continued her advocacy work as she travelled across Ontario, recruiting students and garnering support for the program she had started (Crowley, 1986).

Crowley (1986) asserts that as a figurehead for home economics in Canada, Hoodless is controversial because she was not well received or respected by American Home Economists, as evidenced by derogatory comments made by her American peers due to her noted absence from one of the Lake Placid conferences. Her American counterparts believed that Hoodless displayed a rudimentary understanding of science, labelling any methodical approaches to home economics as scientific without demonstrating a clear understanding of the specific process of scientific methodologies (Crowley, 1986). Crowley (1986) asserts that Hoodless' contributions to the growth and promotion of home economics are undeniable, but must be considered alongside her tendency towards opinion versus the widely held and accepted views of other home economists, coupled with her stubborn, protective, and competitive nature towards other schools of home economics in competition with hers. While Crowley's (1986) portrayal of Hoodless as stubborn pontificator, a trait that might have been revered in a male counterpart trying to promote and recruit for his program, it did not reverberate with her female colleagues. Crowley (1986) explains that perceptions of Hoodless' character became her undoing as she was removed from positions of decision-making authority by women she had originally educated at the MacDonald Institute. Missing from Crowley's (1986) interpretation of the way Hoodless was perceived by her peers is the difference in education and status between them. While some conference attendees like Ellen Swallow Richards were highly educated, Adelaide Hoodless lacked the same formal post-secondary education, perhaps influencing the merit (or lack thereof) given to her approaches by her peers. Despite the controversy surrounding her character, Hoodless is a figure of importance as the founder of home economics and Women's Institutes in Canada, and directly influenced home economics in Saskatchewan by training many of the program's faculty and staff through the MacDonald Institute in Ontario (Rowles, 1964).

## **Boom and Bust: Home Economics in Saskatchewan**

The Saskatchewan Homemakers Clubs held its first annual convention in 1911, and was comprised of many smaller regional clubs that had been established before the first convention. These clubs shared similarities to the Women's Institutes in Ontario and later become an official homemakers club (Rowles, 1964). Established under the supervision of the University of Saskatchewan, the aim of Homemakers Clubs was to provide isolated rural women with opportunities for companionship, education, and community service (Milne, 2004). Milne (2004) argues that Homemakers Clubs helped to redefine urban domesticity to include farm duties which allowed for the recognition and legitimization of women's rural labour, and quietly challenged traditional perceptions of femininity and domesticity. The Director of Agricultural Extension, Professor Francis Hedley Auld, from the University of Saskatchewan, promised homemakers attending the convention that the university would provide support through the production of bulletins and lectures (Rowles, 1964). Auld committed resources for the Homemakers Clubs, knowing that the University senate had moved to establish a school of domestic science at the University of Saskatchewan (U of S) in 1908 (Rowles, 1964). The University senate imagined that a school of domestic science would be the counterpart to the College of Agriculture, which opened in 1912, and would help the university keep up with other land-grant colleges (McLean, 2007; Rowles, 1964). Land-grant colleges were significant because they provided a point of access for all social classes to elevate their status through higher education while simultaneously boosting the economy through the bolstering of agriculture, mechanical, and engineering programs as noted in chapter 3.

The model for The U of S was heavily influenced by American land-grant colleges, and American and British extension programs that aimed to serve the economic and social development of broader society and industry (Jones, 2014; McLean, 2007). The U of S quickly

established engineering, agriculture, and extension programs to that end (Jones, 2014).

Extension programs in particular were intended to democratize access to higher education and became a vehicle to offer scholarly and professional services to communities and industries (McLean, 2007). The practical, community-centered values imbued within land-grant colleges and extension divisions coalesce with many aspects of home economics. From its focus on domesticity, in addition to a long history of service learning, (see Apple, 2015), home economics likely experienced tremendous growth as a subsidiary to agricultural and extension divisions within universities. The growth of home economics is linked to growth in agricultural and extensions branches of universities, although the extent to which this holds true in the present is questionable.

In 1913, the Agricultural Instruction Act (a federal legislation) provided grants for the teaching of household science in Saskatchewan schools for a ten-year period (Rowles, 1964). In April of 1913, The College of Agriculture hired Abigail DeLury (a graduate from the MacDonald Institute in Ontario) as the Director of Women's Work responsible for organizing conventions, writing bulletins, and attending meetings for the Homemakers Club (Rowles, 1964). DeLury was highly interested in women's right to vote, was widely read, and worked with Homemaker's Clubs to establish libraries (Rowles, 1964). Rowles (1964) credits DeLury with broadening the programs undertaken by Homemaker's Clubs. Rowles (1964) points to staffing issues (there were few home economists and they were high in demand) and lack of federal funding for home economics teachers in schools after 1923 to explain the delay from the promise of a school of domestic science in 1908 to its establishment in 1928. In spite of the delays, domestic sciences classes burgeoned after DeLury's hiring which directly support Homemaker's Clubs. It is important to remember that women's groups such as Homemaker's Clubs fought to advocate for the benefits of domestic science to be recognized, and that these



benefits were subsidiary to agricultural programs themselves. Women's tenacity and drive to bring domestic training into post-secondary schools was likely under-estimated. Women's organizations provided them with networking opportunities to organize and exert their influence to meet their desired ends.

The Department of Education offered classes in the summer of 1915 for home economics teachers in the school system (Rowles, 1964). The formal teaching of domestic science began at the U of S in 1916 with a series of summer school classes taught by Fannie Twiss, the Director of Household Science in Saskatchewan; Isabel Shaw, Supervisor of Household Science Moose Jaw; and Helen McMurtry, Household Science Instructor, Kamsack (Rowles, 1964). Twiss later became the Director of Household Science in Canada and would go on to develop the hot school lunch concept as well as the publication of *Recipes for Household Science Classes: Circular No. 5*. Twiss' manual became a widely used home economics resource that would inspire similar manuals in British Columbia (de Zwart 1999 as cited in de Zwart 2003). Mary Moxon (a former student of both the U of S and the MacDonald Institute) was hired to start teaching home economics in the first regular term to students of the Saskatoon Normal School who were temporarily housed on the university campus until their own building could be finished (College of Home Economics, 2007-2008; Rowles 1964). Home responsibilities prevented Moxon from completing the term and she was temporarily replaced by Agnes Bell and Percy Gallup (nee Marshall) (Rowles, 1964). In 1917, Ethel Brittain (nee Rutter), another graduate and former teacher from the MacDonald Institute, was appointed to the faculty of the College of Arts and Science (Rowles, 1964).

In the 1917-1918 academic year, the first household science class was offered and delivered as a combination of sewing and cooking to third- and fourth-year Arts and Science students (Rowles, 1964). The foods lab was originally located in a former physics laboratory in

the administration building (Rowles, 1964). The kitchen was outfitted with one sink, two coal stoves, a small refrigerator, a blackboard, a clock, and two moveable cupboards (Rowles, 1964). The use of the coal stoves is illustrative of the low status and value of home economics as funding did not allow for the newest technology. Coal and gas were both available from the 1830s and coal was likely chosen as a cheaper alternative despite the fact that it still gave off smoke, even with proper ventilation (Trottier, 2018). Rowles (1964) noted the Bunsen burner under metal venting allowed for the conversion to stovetop cooking. Despite the fact that Saskatoon Light and Power was founded in 1906, and electric stoves gained widespread popularity in the 1920s, the coal stoves were used for 23 years, (until 1941) although more modern appliances may have been added over the years (City of Saskatoon, 2018; Rowles, 1964; Trottier, 2018). Rutter taught home economics to Saskatoon Normal School students, until they moved to a new building on Avenue A in 1921, and other foods students for 23 years (Rowles, 1964). Sewing classes were taught in the men's residences in Qu'Appelle Hall (Rowles, 1964).

Several new classes were added over the next few years including a nutrition and diet class in 1919, and a textiles/clothing and interior design class in 1920 (Rowles, 1964). These additional classes coincided with the inception of a one-year certificate for teachers of domestic science which had been developed in light of concerns of teacher shortages and which was offered from 1920-1923 (College of Home Economics, 2007-2008; Rowles, 1964). Household science was introduced into Saskatchewan schools with Federal support through the Agricultural Instruction Act of 1913, although home economics teacher shortages led to the Department of Education requesting the University to develop a one-year special certificate in domestic science (Rowles, 1964). The certificate was offered in 1920-1921, 1921-1922, and 1922-1923 (Rowles, 1964). The certificate produced 6 graduates the first two years, and 1 graduate in the final year of program. A special summer school class in household science that offered a university credit

was offered in 1921 (Rowles, 1964). The class was designed with the needs of the high school teacher in mind (Rowles, 1964). A School of Education was founded in 1927 and granted College status in 1928, although responsibility for home economics teachers training was maintained by home economists until the closure of the College of Home Economics in 1990 (Douthitt, 1985). In 1922, sewing classes were moved to the attic of the new physics building and would be later moved to the basement of the College building (Rowles, 1964). From 1921-1923 and again in 1927, household science summer school classes worth a university credit were offered specifically for high school teachers of home economics in clothing and costume design, and household furnishing and decoration (Rowles, 1964). Rowles (1964) did not provide the reasoning behind the absence of a food component in the program, although it might suggest an underlying assumption about home economics as a feminized discipline. Female teachers would likely have had experience cooking for their families and could therefore muddle their way through teaching cooking in a school setting. In contemporary Saskatchewan schools, this trend plays out as teachers without home economics training are often given foods classes to teach in the absence of trained home economic teachers. This is a common perception amongst the Saskatchewan Home Economics Teachers' Association (SHETA) and other home economists in the province based on the volume of attendees from outside the discipline that call on SHETA for support. It is possible that home economics classes are assigned to people outside the field because there is a shortage of home economics teachers (see Smith & de Zwart, 2010). Similarly, assumptions based on the likelihood that female teachers without home economics education have cooking experience from their own domestic experiences might make it easier to fill home economics teaching vacancies without specialist training. The significance of the epithet that "*anyone can cook*" is often a source of discussion for home economists at the division level as well as through the SHETA, where it is viewed as a reductionist sentiment that

undermines home economics training. While almost anyone can learn to cook, *teaching* it is an entirely different undertaking.

In the 1922-1923 academic year, four-degree classes in household science were offered, allowing Arts and Science students to major or minor in the subject area (Rowles, 1964). By 1923, Agricultural Instruction Act grants had ceased, resulting in few job opportunities for home economics teachers as school divisions struggled to find money to employ specialists (Rowles 1964; Simpson, n.d.). The halting of agricultural instruction grants likely contributed to the interruption of summer courses between 1924-1926. However, on September 24, 1923, the Saskatchewan Government passed an order-in-council requiring that all hospitals with seventy-five beds or over required a dietician. Thus, while the demand for teachers of home economics declined, the need for dieticians educated through household sciences classes were on the rise—thus home economics remained an important tool to train women to meet the needs of government-run health institutions. Rutter felt that dietetics students would have more luck securing internships if they graduated from a School of Household Science (Rowles, 1964). By 1928, the School of Household Science was established within the College of Arts and Science (College of Home Economics 2007-2008; Rowles, 1964). The value of home economics was recognized first to meet labour demands which had shifted towards the health sector. Worthy of note is the constant relocation of home economics classes to various nooks and crannies around campus — a detriment to programs relying on cumbersome equipment, and purposefully planned lab design. The transience of home economics learning spaces on campus may point to the expected impermanence of home economics programming by university administrators and supporting government agencies as funding priorities shifted.

The School's 4-year Bachelor of Household Science degree was planned by Rutter (the department head) and Betha G. Oxner, the Dean of Women at Acadia University, who took two

years to develop and introduce the home economics degree program at the Acadia University (Rowles, 1964). Rutter continued her education while teaching the University achieving a bachelor of philosophy from Chicago University in 1921 and an M.A. at Teachers College at Columbia University in 1929. The program was prescribed with the exception of electives, requiring five household science classes, 12 arts and science classes, and three Arts and Science electives (Rowles, 1964). A key component of the program was a furnished rental house which was occupied by one of the professors and used to teach in the area of home management (Rowles, 1964). The makeup of the degree program reveals the disproportionate number of classes required for a degree in household science that were not subject area courses (a 1:3 ratio). It would be interesting to know if Rutter and Oxner constructed this imbalance of household science classes or if final program decisions were made by extraneous university administrators. Graduate options after completion of the degree included one year in the College of Education or Normal School to become a teacher of home economics or a post-graduate opportunity in a hospital to earn dietetics certification (Rowles, 1964).

Throughout the 1930s, enrollment increased rapidly but budgets did not (The College of Home Economics, 2007-2008). The three instructors (Rutter, Oxner, and Helen Wilmot who was started in 1930), took salary decreases to offset increasing enrollment without the support of funding increases (Rowles Simpson, n.d.). Despite poor employment prospects, home economics course enrollment did not decrease, as parents encouraged schooling, refusing to let their young people remain idle (Rowles, 1964). By 1932, the home management rental house had to be terminated as belt-tightening occurred throughout the campus while the depression strengthened its grip on the prairies (Rowles, 1964). Rowles (1964) explains, “Where it was impossible to cut expenses, the status quo was maintained, but expansion was out of the question. For almost ten years there were few if any increases in faculty, accommodation, or

equipment, and salaries were reduced rather than increased” (p. 88). A 40 percent reduction in provincial grants lead to a deduction of 19 percent between 1930-1933 (University Archives and Special Collection, 2018). While Rowles (1964) notes that expansion of the home economics program was out of the question, it remained a priority for the university. Many colleges and schools were established throughout the fiscal difficulties of the 1930s including the School of Physical Education, and the School of Music in 1931 (University Archives and Special Collection, 2018). Regina College became part of the U of S in 1934; St. Thomas Moore College and the College of Accounting in 1936; and the School of Nursing in 1938 (University Archives and Special Collection, 2018).

Despite poor employment prospects, Rowles (1964) speculates that parents prioritized schooling for their children to prepare them for the impending economic recovery, evidenced by an increase of home economics class offerings at the U of S, from three full and four half classes in 1928 to 19 half classes by 1940 (Rowles, 1964). Regardless of the stagnation of funds for the program during the 1930s, students at the U of S banded together to raise the professional status of the discipline through the creation of a student society in 1931, calling themselves the Household Science Association. The student society designed a crest (see Figure 1):

...depicting the colors of the spectrum, which appear when white light — the light of knowledge — is broken into its component parts. An initiation ceremony for new students with the lighting of candles was adopted. The selection of a Senior Stick, an honorary position conferred by vote of classmates, was introduced in 1936. (The College of Home Economics, 2007-2008, par. 3.)

The development of the student association and a crest are significant because they illustrate the importance of networks of women supporting each other, fragments of which remain through the Association of Saskatchewan Home Economists (ASHE) and the Saskatchewan Home Economics Teachers Association (SHETA), who both still meet regularly and have an active and enthusiastic membership.



*Figure 4.1: U of S Home Ec Student Society Crest: Designed by the Household Science Association, the crest symbolizes the transdisciplinary nature of home economics. Used with permission of the University of Saskatchewan.*

Professor Rutter resigned in June of 1940, knowing that she would not be able to see the needed changes for the expansion of the program through, despite boasting an enrollment of 147 students (The College of Home Economics, 2007-2008; Rowles, 1964). Professor Rutter was named Professor Emeritus upon her retirement, and was made an honorary member of the Canadian Home Economics Teachers Association in 1950 (Rowles, 1964).

As the economic depression of the 1930s began to lift, class enrollment skyrocketed. This was likely due to improving economic conditions, and families encouraged post-secondary education in anticipation of stronger economic times and job prospects ahead. The School of Household Science became a College in 1942 (the first in Canada) with Dr. Hunt serving as the first dean (The College of Home Economics, 2007-2008; Rowles, 1964). Gaining college status is important because it validates the value of the home economics body of knowledge within academic settings as an area worthy of study, independent of its supporting role to nursing, education, and dietetics. College status allowed home economists involved in the teaching of home economics at the U of S to have more autonomy through independent administration, faculty, finances, and operations. The newly formed College of Household science, was able to offer a new four-year degree (Rowles, 1964). Dr. Hope Hunt, focused on expansion, securing a new home management rental house, and providing hands-on experiences for students through

housekeeping the university residences and working in the cafeteria at Saskatchewan Hall (Rowles, 1964).

The College's facilities were moved by the Physics Annex, housed in air force huts, remnants of the World War II (The College of Home Economics, 2007-2008; Rowles, 1964). In 1949/1950, household sciences classes were also offered through Regina College<sup>4</sup>, extending its reach (Rowles, 1964). In 1952, the program's name was revised to the College of Home Economics (The College of Home Economics, 2007-2008; Rowles, 1964). By 1963, students in the College of Home Economics could choose between a major in teaching and extension or a major in foods and nutrition (Rowles, 1964). The choice of majors foreshadows the splintering of home economics courses that would occur much later. Rowles (1964) outlined her vision to propel the College forward,

A College of Home Economics has four distinct responsibilities: as part of a University it educates people, as a professional school it educates home economists; it conducts research on homemaking problems; it gives leadership in matters relating to home economics. The College of Home Economics of the University of Saskatchewan has made a beginning in all these areas. The future must provide enlarged, and permanent quarters, and increased staff so a wider choice of subject matter may be offered, **more research undertaken, and graduate work commenced** [emphasis added]. (p. 91)

Rowles (1964) recognized that graduate work and research were valued and required to ensure the longevity of the discipline at the University of Saskatchewan. In 1967, the College developed a professional ring ceremony which was adopted by all home economics programs in Canada as well as the Canadian Home Economics Association. The ring ceremony is important

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<sup>4</sup> Regina College was a junior college allowed by the University of Saskatchewan in 1923 as a way of standardizing university courses and to discourage the growth of independent denominational educational institutions (University of Saskatchewan Archives, n.d.). With a major reduction in provincial grants across the province, a grant from the Carnegie Corporation helped the University of Saskatchewan assume responsibility for funding and administering programs at Regina College from 1934-1974 (University of Saskatchewan Archives, n.d.). Regina College later regained independence and became the University of Regina in 1974 (University of Saskatchewan Archives, n.d.).



because it illustrates a desire to professionalize home economics practice, and illustrates that home economics in Saskatchewan was connected to the national study of home economics more than it is now.

The 1970s and 1980s saw continued high enrollment in post-secondary home economics programs along with several curriculum revisions (College of Home Economics, 2007-2008). The late 1980s brought about an internal review, followed by an external study due to concerns about the number of course offerings in relation to productivity and the size of the College (College of Home Economics, 2007-2008). Having fought for its survival throughout the 1980s, the College of Home Economics was officially terminated in 1990 (College of Home Economics, 2007-2008). Personal notes made from meetings with College faculty, binders from faculty member Dr. Douthitt and Dean Gwenna Moss, and a College review indicate multiple causes for the closure. Of note, a lack of research being produced by the College of Home Economics was cited as one of the major reasons for the senate review and the ultimate closure of the college in the final report containing the senate's decision to disband the College (Douthitt, 1985).

In Home Economics faculty interviews conducted as part of the review process, incidences of disrespect by other faculty members in outside colleges were shared, which had contributed to Home Economists experiencing a hostile environment within the university. For example, in a memorandum to the College of Home Economics Review Committee, James P. Olson (a researcher in Nutrition and Dietetics within the College), stated, "If the twits, who insist on taking pot shots at a struggling College, have nothing better to do than try to harm others, they should be bluntly told to go play billiards at the Faculty Club and not bother those that have a job to do and who want to get on in their work" (Olson, 1986, p. 2). It is possible that vocal colleagues/critics were reacting to the lack of research being produced by the College — a currency used to delineate status within universities. It is also possible that a subject area built

around domestic labor was seen as outdated from the perspective of a liberal academic community experiencing several key advances to the status of women including the Canadian Human Rights act of 1977 (a charter that prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, nationality, ethnicity, sex, and ability); the creation of a portfolio for the position of Minister Responsible for the Status of Women in 1981; the Charter of Rights and Freedoms being enacted as part of the Constitution Act in 1982 (with Section 15 on equality rights coming into effect in 1985, in order to give governments time to align their laws with the charter); and the Employment Equity Act in 1986 (requiring employers to identify and eliminate barriers to employment for visible-minorities, people with disabilities, Indigenous people, and women). With a focus on domestic labor (having less value without wage earning potential with the disappearance of the domestic servant), and the well-being of individuals, families, and communities, home economics had less value in an academic world shifting its measure of success and achievement towards status, recognition, and monetization — a shift driven by a global trend towards neoliberalism<sup>5</sup>.

There is evidence to suggest that faculty in the College of Home Economics recognized the value of research but felt that there were other obstacles preventing more research from being produced. Olson, remarked that an inability to secure funding, and a lack of faculty with similar research expertise were limitations to achieving professional aspirations (Olson, 1986). Many faculty members recognized the importance of research but felt that outside pressures (such as service to industry), funding and administrative changes were making research difficult.

Margaret Crowle, another professor in the College explained:

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<sup>5</sup> Neoliberalism is an economic paradigm that gives primacy to corporate tax cuts, privatizing the commons, de-regulating private industry (while simultaneously hyper-regulating the public sector), and weakening the collective bargaining rights of workers (Orlowski, 2015).

One of the weaknesses of our College is that too many faculty have been hired with responsibility for professional practice rather than research. We must be careful, particularly in the family finance and consumer studies area to insist that the primary responsibility of faculty will not be to professional practice as consultants to business or in legal assistance clinics. They should have experience in this area, but, at a University, primary responsibility must be to teach and to do research in family economic behaviour (Crowle, 1986, p. 7)

While faculty in the College wanted to prioritize research, practical and applied teaching and learning took precedence. As funding and values shifted, the discipline of home economics at the U of S no longer measured up to what was expected of a discipline in a university.

The termination of the College of Home Economics in 1990 considered multiple aspects of the College's functions and operations during the review process including an examination of the College's historical outline, organizational structure, programs, performance indicators, and briefs from external constituents (Steering Committee, 1985). However, research production was an important performance indicator recognized by the faculty of the College of Home Economics within the context of the University of Saskatchewan. In minutes of a meeting for the internal review of the College, Robin Douthitt (who was a faculty member and member of the review committee) advocated on behalf of her colleagues to Vice-Presidents Holmlund and Schnell:

Dr. Douthitt stated that some faculty members may object to releasing their C.V.'s for scrutiny...Dr. Douthitt noted that some of the appointments were not research appointments and that if C.V.'s were to be looked at, the faculty would also ask that the terms of reference of the appointments be looked at. (Steering Committee, 1985, p. 3)

Faculty CVs were a record of research and served as a performance indicator. Many faculty members felt limited by heavy teaching loads and lack of administrative support (see discussion of faculty members Olson and Crowle in Chapter 4).

In a report to the president of the University of Saskatchewan (President Kristjanson), for the academic year 1985-86 in the College of Home Economics, Dean Gwenna Moss explained

that the Internal Review Committee had completed their review and presented their report in March 1986 (Moss, 1986). They recommend that a College of Family Studies and Human Nutrition replace the existing College, that clothing and textiles and interior design be discontinued, and that the College of Education should assume responsibility for the education of home economics teachers, but that an autonomous College *should* be maintained (Moss, 1986, p. 2). The recommendation was endorsed by external reviewers (Moss, 1986, p. 2). The College Tenure and Promotions Committee recommended that Douthitt be granted tenure and a position as Associate Professor on July 1, 1986 (Moss, 1986, p. 8). Three faculty members resigned effective July 1, 1986 including J.P. Olson, and Douthitt (Moss, 1986, p. 8). Douthitt's resignation is curious as it took effect the day that she was offered a coveted tenure position. The new dean, Eva Lee, noted in her report to the president for the 1986-1987 academic year that President Kristjanson announced several recommendations for the division of home economics programming and the closure of the College of Home Economics June 30, 1990 (Lee, 1987). In her last report to the president Moss mused about the future of home economics at the University of Saskatchewan, "It remains my hope that the University will be able to move in creative and constructive ways to support programs which have both academic integrity and social utility" (Moss, 1986, p. 10).

With the closure of the College of Home Economics, programming was splintered as courses of value to other colleges were salvaged and restructured to strengthen their programs (Lee, 1988). Dietetics programming was transferred to the College of Pharmacy and a faculty position was created in the College of Education for the training of home economics teachers which was filled by Bev Pain, a faculty member from the disestablished college (College of Home Economics, 2007-2008). While former alumni (many of whom make up the membership of ASHE) of the past college maintain ties to the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition, attending

events and celebrating milestones with Pharmacy and Nutrition students, the degree to which current students in the program identify as home economists is doubtful. In February of 2015, Roy Dobson, chair of the academic programs committee, reported to the University Council that the 4-year home economics teacher education program had been terminated as per council approval and replaced with a certificate program for students already holding a Bachelor of Education or Class A teacher's certificate (University Council, 2015 January; University Council 2015, February). Some discussion occurred around the suitability for home economics and industrial arts to be run out of a polytechnic college, while Jay Wilson (as department head of the unit where the program had been housed) argued for a distinction between people trained for the trades versus those trained to teach educate students in secondary schools (University Council, 2015, January). The purpose and benefit of certificate programs at the U of S was in question at the time (University Council, 2015, February).

An announcement regarding the termination of the last vestige of a home economics teacher education program in the province would not come as a surprise to home economists who have been fighting to keep the program alive for many, many years. ASHE members comprised of alumni from the College of Home Economics (a previous generation of home economists) have put in the hard work of political activism and seem ready to pass on the torch to the younger generation of home economists. As the active political body left to address the closure of the home economics program, coupled with concerns about the effectiveness and longevity of the current certificate program which has been in part responsible for a shortage of trained home economics educators), SHETA has been particularly quiet. Aside from an attempt to become involved in teaching financial literacy courses in Prince Albert for the certificate program (a partnership that is no longer occurring), the lines of communication have dropped

between SHETA and the College of Education (Michelle Hardy, personal communication, October 5, 2019).

Smith and de Zwart (2010) share that there are shortages of home economics teachers on an international, national, and provincial scale. Across the globe, the closures, reduction and/or restructuring of home economics undergraduate programs has led to a decline in professionally trained home economics teachers (Smith & de Zwart, 2010). Millie Reynolds (an active member of the Association of Saskatchewan Home Economists (ASHE) and former member of the U of S Senate) has concerns about the future of the program as historically, decisions regarding the status and direction of home economists and their programs are often made without consultation from specialists within the field as exemplified by the exclusion of home economists in the development of the new certificate program (personal communication, February 12, 2015). Patricia Gillies, involved with Graduate and Certificate Support in the Department of Curriculum Studies, explained that the certificate course meets standards developed according to the Ministry of Education's PAA/provincial curriculum standards (personal communication, May 7, 2020). Courses in the program are held in Saskatoon, and instructors are selected by the department head in the Curriculum Studies Department (Patricia Gillies, personal communication, May 7, 2020). SHETA has a responsibility to loudly advocate for its members and the discipline it represents at the University level and to the public, in order to garner support for the continuation of home economics education in Saskatchewan. The future of the profession and the organization itself is endangered without the development of new home economists in the field.

## **A Brief Periodization of Home Economics**

The emergence of home economics at the Lake Placid conferences and the naming of the discipline expose underlying tensions around how the discipline is conceptualized and practiced in the present. There is not a unified approach to the discipline: "Home economics could be what anyone wished it to be — conservative or reform, traditional or innovative, scientific or domestic" (Stage, 1997, p. 9). Building on Stage's summarization of the competing ideologies in home economics, I add the binary of technical/skills based or theoretical knowledge. What has remained constant throughout the history of home economics has been the goal to improve life for individuals, families, and communities. Just as the development and decline of home economics has been tied to social, political, and economic conditions, so too has the focus of home economics education. What has changed are the ways in which the goal of improving life for individuals, families, and communities are actualized.

While certain individuals in the history of home economics have argued that the purpose of the discipline is linked to furthering the aims of social justice, the discipline as a whole cannot claim to share the same aspirations throughout its development (de Zwart, 2003; Smith & de Zwart, 2010). However, Apple (2015) contends that a sense of social responsibility was embedded in the discipline from the its emergence at the Lake Placid conferences. While the ways in which home economics pursued its goal to achieve the well-being of individuals, families, and communities has shifted to meet societal needs over time, service learning projects that are integral to many home economics and family studies programs in the present illustrate that the discipline has shifted its focus once again to reconnect with its emphasis on social responsibility (Apple, 2015). While I argue in chapter 5 that service learning without a critical social and ecological pedagogy of home economics will not lead to long-lasting well-being for individuals, families, communities, evidence of the desire towards social responsibility supports

the relevancy and potential of this work. In addition, a brief periodization illustrates how home economics has evolved to meet the changing needs of society throughout its history, laying the groundwork for the discipline to evolve in Saskatchewan in the present.

Smith and de Zwart (2010) plot the evolution of home economics pedagogies as a reflection of societal values throughout each stage: The first period from 1900-1920 emphasized hands-on life skills, the second period from 1926-1961 moved towards addressing issues of social efficacy, and the third period from 1961-1990s focused on consumer decision-making and practical reasoning (Smith & de Zwart, 2010). In the present day, Smith and de Zwart (2010) understand that home economics in Canada aims to address issues around:

...maintaining health, securing housing, acquiring appropriate clothing, caring for children, ensuring food security, making ethical consumer decisions, and so on. It is unique in teaching about foods and nutrition, parenting, human relationships and development, resource management, consumerism, clothing and textiles, housing and aesthetics, and integrating these topics and decisions about daily life with the well-being and fair treatment of people and the environment. (p. 21)

Thus, home economics reaches beyond the individual and/or family unit to acknowledge the interrelationship between the environment, local and global communities, and the ways that choices we make around everyday life can impact social justice and quality of life for others. With an understanding of some of the values and goals (both positive and negative) imagined by the founding members of the Lake Placid Conferences, coupled with the projects and goals of the International Federation for Home Economics, ecological and social justice is a pathway through which home economics will better the lives of individuals, families, and communities in the present.

However, while home economics globally is concerned with taking up issues of social and ecological justice to improve lives for individuals, families, and communities, Saskatchewan home economics curricula renewal appears to be focusing efforts on strengthening relationships



between home economics and the trades/industry. Strengthening of this emphasis is evidenced in career modules in home economics curricula, and apprenticeship programs and skills bootcamps developed by the Saskatoon Industry Education Council or SIEC (with federal and provincial funding, and support from the Saskatoon Tribal Council, Saskatoon Public and Catholic School Divisions, and Prairie Spirit School Division). While these opportunities offer exciting ways for students to experience careers and even earn apprenticeship hours in the trades (including home economics), they give the impression that home economics knowledge and skills are valuable as a commodity to be monetized in the public sphere, versus its value and worth to improve daily life and well-being in the private sphere. Similarly, the interrelationship between private and public spheres is ignored. While its connection to hands-on skills and career applications are a part of the multidisciplinary nature of home economics making it a unique discipline, it is but one piece of a larger whole.

Orienting home economics towards careers, skills and trades is not surprising given the sources of revenue in Saskatchewan including agriculture, forestry, mining, oil and natural gas. Canada's Changing Climate Report (Bush & Lemmen, 2019), explains that climate change in Canada is occurring at twice the rate of other locales across the globe and that human activity (aka industry) is the direct cause of climate change which contributes to social and ecological injustice. By commodifying home economics knowledge and skills, a career/skills/trades orientation for home economics diverges from the foundational goals of the profession to improve the well-being of individuals, families, and communities.

The development of a critical social and ecological pedagogical framework for Saskatchewan home economics education is a strategic maneuver that may help breathe new life into a discipline in decline. The timing is propitious. Climate change threatens to dramatically impact our way of life and requires the attention of all disciplines to work towards lessening the

harmful impacts of increased global temperatures on our health and safety (see Bush & Lemmen, 2019). For example, France became the first country to ban supermarkets from throwing away or destroying leftover food, forcing them to donate it to food banks and charities; in this case addressing the ecological impact of food waste and food security issues. Home economics programs are well suited to raising awareness of issues like these, developing context to help students understand why citizens should care, and teaching them how they can engage in active citizenship to encourage governments to support policies that improve well-being.

Individuals, families, and communities also have power to influence businesses and corporations towards sustainable futures through ethical consumption. For example, zero-waste grocery stores are emerging across Canada using a business model that encourages consumers to purchase only what they need in order to reduce food waste, as well as reducing food packaging through the use of re-useable containers, produce and shopping bags that customers bring from home (Nguyen, 2019). These businesses have emerged from consumer demands based on a growing number of people trying to live zero-waste lifestyles (Nguyen, 2019). As ethical consumption-based businesses grow in popularity, they have the potential to influence mainstream business, and offer alternatives to consumers in the present. Home economics is perfectly positioned as a trans-disciplinary subject area, to help citizens navigate the impacts of climate change and to inform individuals, families, and communities about how they can make everyday decisions and support local policies that lessen our impact on the earth and improve overall quality of life.

### **Global Conceptualizations of Home Economics in the Present**

Broadening the scope of this work, an examination of the way that the discipline is conceptualized on a global scale in the present, sets a precedent that is difficult to reconcile with

conservative, traditional, technical/skills-based approaches to home economics. To that end, the International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) is an international non-government organization (NGO) founded in 1908 that brings together individuals and organizations from 60 different countries, and unites home economists to achieve sustainable living for individuals, families, and communities (IFHE, 2019). The organization was granted consultative status with the UN in 1981. IFHE later began work with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) and the UN Educational and Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and is a member on an NGO advising the World Health Organization (WHO) (IFHE, 2019). IFHE publishes a refereed e-journal and facilitates a World Congress with over 1000 participants (IFHE, 2019).

A position statement from IFHE illustrates the many ways in which the pursuit of social and ecological justice coalesces with the goals of the profession in the present (see IFHE, 2008). As an academic discipline, home economics educates new scholars, conducts research, and creates new knowledge (IFHE, 2008, pg. 1). As an arena for everyday living, home economics seeks to develop human growth potential and meet basic needs (IFHE, 2008, p. 1). In a curricular capacity, home economics seeks to help students discover and develop their own resources and personal capabilities (IFHE, 2008, p. 1). On a societal level, home economics seeks to influence and develop policy to achieve empowerment and well-being for individuals, families, and communities; to utilise transformative practices; and to facilitate sustainable futures (IFHE, 2008, p. 1). IFHE (2008) emphasizes that to be successful in these four areas of practice, home economics must not remain static and must constantly evolve — a source of encouragement as home economics in Saskatchewan works to realign with the discipline at large.

According to IFHE (2008), there are three essential dimensions that all home economics subjects, courses of study, and professionals in the field should exhibit. Home economics must

focus on fundamental needs and practical concerns to ensure the well-being of individuals, families, and communities (local and global) in an ever-changing and challenging environment (IFHE, 2008, p. 2). Home economics must integrate multi-disciplinary knowledge, processes and practical skills through inter- and transdisciplinary inquiry (IFHE, 2008, p. 2). All home economics subjects, courses, and professionals should strive towards a critical/transformative/emancipatory action orientation to enhance well-being at all levels and sectors of society (IFHE, 2008, p. 2). Examples of transformative practices in home economics includes many projects and initiatives to address disciplinary priorities including poverty alleviation, gender equality, and social justice concerns (IFHE, 2008, p. 2). Partnered with other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), home economists seek to improve prosperity through projects in areas such as peace education, gender issues/ women's empowerment, women's reproductive issues, HIV/AIDS, intervention projects for families in distress and other human rights issues (IFHE, 2008, p. 2).

Social and ecological justice are the current centrifuge through which the areas of practice, and the dimensions of home economics are filtered, to achieve overall well-being for people and the planet. Home economics aims to empower citizens through advocacy, lobbying, policy development, and education to adapt lifestyles for reducing ecological footprints. Home economics can reorient itself in the present by helping individuals, families, and communities live sustainably. The Canadian Climate Change document (Bush & Lemmen, 2019) advises, "Collective action in pursuit of the global temperature goal is being implemented; however, it is recognized that this goal will only reduce and not eliminate the risks and impacts of climate change. Governments and citizens need to understand how climate change might impact them, in order to plan and prepare for the challenges that climate change brings" (p. 11). UNESCO's (2016) Global Education Monitoring Report warns that key global education commitments may

be met half a century late with consequences that come at the expense of major development outcomes. Education must fundamentally change to reach the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (UNESCO, 2016). A critical social and ecological pedagogy for the teaching of home economics has significant and meaningful contributions to make towards climate action and the Sustainable Development Agenda by guiding home economists as they help individuals, families, and communities self-actualize their contributions towards social and ecological justice.

The discipline of home economics has much to contribute to helping individuals, families, and communities live in such a way that lessens their ecological footprint, maximizes health outcomes, and supports participation in climate action strategies as individuals, and a part of larger communities. While climate action has not been the focus of the discipline historically, the discipline's capacity to adapt and reposition itself as a response to evolving economic, political, and social concerns, is a distinguishing feature lending to the enduring legacy of home economics. Some home economics scholars view the adaptive nature of home economics (to reflect and meet the changing needs of people within societies), coupled with its transdisciplinary approach in doing so (rooted in the social sciences) as one of its core strengths (see Apple, 2015; IFHE, 2008). Towards ensuring the longevity of the profession through adaptation to current contexts, the IFHE (2008):

... has commenced its future-proofing strategy by focussing on questions of sustainability, advocacy and the active creation of preferred futures for Home Economics, relevant disciplinary fields, and the profession itself, while critically reflecting upon and being informed by its historical roots. (p. 2)

It is essential for home economists in Saskatchewan to understand how the discipline is perfectly situated to address climate risks and move towards taking climate action, in order to realign the trajectory of the field with the discipline at large.

Home economics recognizes the interplay between individuals, families, communities, and the environment:

Its historical origins place Home Economics in the context of the home and household, and this is extended in the 21st century to include the wider living environments as we better understand that the capacities, choices and priorities of individuals and families impact at all levels, ranging from the household, to the local and also the global (glocal) community. (IFHE, 2008, p. 1)

While progressive in recognizing the impact of the environment on personal, community, and global well-being, the environment is positioned as external to the inner core of human life and relationships. As a profession that self-identifies as flexible and willing to adapt, understandings of the interconnectedness of people and the planet must evolve, influenced by the rapid pace of recent climate research that demands immediate shifts in policy and behaviour. A shift from an *ego-centric* stance on the environment outside the core of human relationships, to an *eco-centric* shift where the well-being of the environment is the center point from which human well-being is made possible, holds promise to shift societal thinking about climate change. Current climate data and impending climate risks intertwine the well-being of the planet to the well-being of individuals, families, and, communities. Thus, disciplinary goals must shift to foster the well-being of individuals, families, communities, *and* the environment equally. Regardless of the needed shift in positioning of the environment *alongside* individuals, families, and communities, it is essential to recognize that the current goals of the discipline have already shifted towards issues of sustainability and addressing climate action.

### **Past, Present, & Future**

Analysis of the history of home economics in Saskatchewan reveals factors that might contribute to the disconnect between the provincial focus of the profession and the goals of the profession internationally. The loss of the College of Home Economics at the U of S and the resulting fragmentation of the discipline have contributed to the divergence of home economics education from the goals of the discipline on an international level. Professional development

opportunities are limited to what is offered through SHETA conferences which are planned and facilitated by home economists, most of whom convoked from the home economics teacher education program. Many home economists in positions of leadership within SHETA have not had the benefit of understanding the historical foundations of their discipline, as the fragmentation of the discipline disconnected the home economics teacher education program from the theoretical underpinnings of home economics. National and international home economics professional development opportunities provide an important professional basis of comparison to evaluate how home economics in Saskatchewan measures up although participation by Saskatchewan home economists is limited.

One such professional development opportunity attended by home economists from Manitoba, Alberta, and Ontario is the Canadian Symposium, a biennial conference where home economics researchers and practitioners present papers on a variety of topics. The conference serves as an opportunity to collaborate across a diverse and transdisciplinary field, and to reorient professional practice with directions and changes to the field across Canada and world-wide. There is no requirement for provincial home economics organizations to institute work presented at the conference. Often hosted in various locales across Canada since 1991, the Association of Saskatchewan Home Economists (ASHE) took the lead on hosting it in Saskatoon in 1997. Saskatchewan Home Economists are underrepresented at the event and the ones who do attend are often enrolled in the online graduate studies course at the University of British Columbia (UBC). British Columbia does not have a professional home economist designation. However, UBC offers graduate courses in home economics and promotes the conference internationally. In contrast, SHETA was hesitant to offer support for the Symposium planned in Saskatoon for the spring of 2021. As a facilitator of the planning committee, I asked my

professional organization to endorse and promote the event. The executive council had concerns that the Symposium will interfere with their own conference planned in the fall of 2020.

I was met with a similar reception when I approached SHETA for support in the beginning stages of this research because many on the executive council agreed that social justice was not a concern of the discipline. Neoliberal values that emphasize individual rights and unregulated capitalism without government intervention in the market have eroded earlier home economics models of cooperation and activism for improved social conditions. It also contributes to an understanding of why there is resistance to new understandings of home economics curricula and pedagogy that challenge the status quo in Saskatchewan. The passion, organization, and action that home economics alumni have shown for the discipline might well be rooted in the disproportionate amount of time they have had to spend defending the discipline (see Moss, 1985 as discussed in chapter 2) — a legacy taken up by the current generation of home economists who lack the foundational understanding of the discipline held by their predecessors.

Home economists believe in the value of what they do and have shown time and again their ability to organize in support of the discipline to which they belong. In one sense, keeping home economics programming alive has been in and of itself, a form of resistance. As an applied science, home economists produced less research than faculty in other colleges, especially when responding to increased demand for trained home economics teachers and dietitians. While these demands renewed outside interest in home economics at the time, it also led to the splintering of the discipline as home economics knowledge and skills became absorbed by other disciplines from education and pharmacy and nutrition. Only when home economics achieved college status did the discipline illustrate its worth *independently*, as a distinct academic discipline worthy of value apart from its transdisciplinary contributions to agriculture, the



extension division, nursing, and dietetics. Home economics in Saskatchewan struggled to carve out its own unique contribution to the academy, and consequently played a supporting role to other colleges and programs. Edith Rowles Simpson, the Dean of the College of Home Economics at the U of S from 1965-1972, directly articulated her turmoil at the idea of conceptualizing home economics as a profession in her book, *Home economics in Canada: The early history of six college programs: prologue to change* (Rowles, 1964; The College of Home Economics, 2007-2008). In 1964, Edith C. Rowles, explained that home economics did not quite earn professional status in her eyes because a body of formal knowledge was needed. Likewise, she explained that members within the field were needed to revise and disseminate knowledge to other home economists which she saw as an area of weakness in the subject area (Rowles, 1964).

The opinions of Rowles (1964) are particularly influential as she later became Dean of College of Home Economics changing her name to Edith Rowles Simpson. Interestingly, Rowles was in a position of authority and leadership and could have worked towards changing the status of home economics but did not. Historical figures in home economics history such as Rowles, Hoodless, Richards, and Beecher seemed to have maintained the status quo. They recognized the potential of home economic, but failed to organize and politicize home economists or the public to advocate for the value and worth of discipline beyond the private sphere. Without a source of leverage in the present to change the way that home economics is situated in academic hierarchies, home economists might consider garnering *public* support and helping the public recognize the value of the discipline. Indeed, pressure from the public, and media publicity were instrumental in reversing the termination of home economics programming at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in 2007 (Smith & de Zwart, 2010). Similarly, developing a professional designation for home economics offers promise to provide home economists in Saskatchewan autonomy in matters relating to the discipline.

Currently, Saskatchewan is bereft of a government recognized professional home economics designation and related governing body, in contrast to Manitoba, Alberta, and Ontario. Professional Home Economist regulatory bodies participate in a variety of activities including setting and maintaining professional standards, supporting students in home economics programs, mentorship, creating and evaluating curricula, communicating and making the body of home economics knowledge and research accessible to members of the wider community, and developing and participating in continued professional growth opportunities (Alberta Human Ecology and Home Economics Association, n.d.; Ontario Home Economics Association, 2018; Manitoba Association of Home Economists 2019). In Alberta, the discipline was professionalized in 1989 when the Alberta Home Economics Association registered under the Professional and Occupational Associations Registration Act and became responsible for regulating its members (Alberta Human Ecology and Home Economics Association [AHEA], n.d.). In 2002, home economists in Alberta shifted to the name human ecologist with changes to legislation granting the use of the designation Professional Human Ecologist and Professional Home Economist, as well as the use of the abbreviation PHEc for both (AHEA, n.d.). PHEcs have met qualifications that ensure training and experience based on education from approved institutions set out in Alberta legislation, and are guided by a professional code of ethics (AHEA, n.d.). PHEcs work across a variety of settings including business, government, healthcare, education, and community agencies (AHEA n.d.). Professionalization of the discipline has united home economists within a discipline where individual subjects have been restructured across a variety of colleges and programs, allowing for a collective identity, the formation of shared goals, a network of people with which to organize and lobby for policies that support the aims of Home Economics at large.

The Ontario Home Economics Association (OHEA) has also achieved professional status from the Government of Ontario with parameters around membership (OHEA, 2018) similar to Alberta. OHEA has targeted public relations and community outreach. The OHEA website is evidence of the consultative status of home economists in Ontario in relation to pertinent issues in the news and its high value to the community, as PHECs are frequent guests on radio and television programs (OHEA, 2018). Resources are shared, and sections on their website engage community members such as “Ask a PHEC” (OHEA, 2018). These initiatives help the public to understand the scope of home economics disciplines, and the perceived value of home economists in the province. Another benefit from professionalizing the discipline is the impetus to include the participation of professional home economics associations within governments and academic institutions in developing policies that affect home economists since professional bodies often have autonomy through their mechanisms of self-governance.

Home economics educators in Saskatchewan have not connected to home economics on a national and international scale because provincially, the discipline has been hyper-focused on survival rather than growth and development. Likewise, with the closure of the College of Home Economics, opportunities for professional growth through participation and exposure to current research have been limited. Practicing home economics educators and dietitians in the field are being taught as educators and dietitians first, rather than home economists. Resistance within the field to the development of critical social and ecological frameworks for home economics education might be encountered because the field is stagnant. To continue the tradition of improving the lives of individuals, families, and communities, home economists need to reposition through a critical social and ecological justice-oriented pedagogy for the teaching of home economics. Words Simpson shared in 1964 reverberate today in that home economics must adapt to the times: “The early plans were in keeping with the times in which they were laid,

the future plans must keep pace with the new demands on homemakers and home economists: a revised curriculum and new quarters are on the way” (p. 91). Home economics must evolve along with the changing needs of society. Curricula is being renewed to help facilitate the updating of home economics curricula; however, the teacher preparation for curricula delivery must also be considered.

At a Canadian National Home Economics Conference in the late 1990s, Smith and Peterat (2000) reported, through information collected by home economists in a focus group, that home economists share a vision for a more humane world and have a desire to work towards issues of social justice with the purpose of improving the human condition. One benefit to being on the fringes of traditional academia is the possibility for alternative pedagogical practices that demonstrate different ways of knowing, learning, and teaching (Peterat, 1989a). Peterat (1989a) supports the teaching of content and teaching which is unique to home economics. Thus, a critical social and ecological framework for the teaching of home economics is one option to help the discipline chart new territory, work towards revitalization of the discipline and appeal to families, individuals, and communities in the promotion of their well-being based on their current needs.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **HOME ECONOMICS, THE CLIMATE CRISIS, AND PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES**

#### **Environmental Risks**

Developing a critical social and ecological pedagogy for the teaching of home economics in Saskatchewan is necessary to reposition and revitalize the discipline locally, in pursuit of the goals of the profession to promote the well-being of individuals, families, and communities. In contemporary contexts, the climate crisis is the most pressing and urgent issue affecting the health and well-being of the Earth's citizens. Recent reports from Environment and Climate Change Canada, the United Nations (UN), The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and the World Health Organization (WHO), support the severity of current and future climate change impacts and the urgency with which governments, institutions, industries, special agencies and civilians must take climate action to avoid ill impacts to human health and ecosystems (see Bush & Lemmen, 2019; International Governmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], 2019; UN, 2019; WHO, 2019).

Definitive shifts in home economics discourse towards addressing issues of sustainable development are evident across Canadian, and International Home Economics research (see Edstrom, de Zwart, & Tong, 2017 and Edstrom & Renwick, 2019; Pendergast, 2017 and 2008). From presentations addressing sustainability at a bi-annual Canadian Home Economics Symposium drawing scholars from around the world including Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Kenya, Japan and Malta, a plethora of peer-reviewed articles in the International Journal of Home Economics, and position statements released by the International Federation For Home Economics (IFHE) on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, it is evident that many home economists recognize that addressing climate action, and sustainability are paramount to helping

citizens achieve personal, familial, and community well-being. However, the extent to which home economics practitioners in Saskatchewan make use of a critical social and ecological approach to the teaching of home economics is questionable. A compelling case must be made to aid home economists in Saskatchewan to consider why empowering citizens for ecological and social justice is a pathway towards supporting the well-being of individuals, families, and communities, and a way to revitalize the discipline.

Climate change is the most pressing issue facing the citizens of today because human industrial processes are threatening the extinction of civilization, most species, and the planet itself (Bush & Lemmen, 2019; Foster, 2010; IPCC, 2019; UN, 2019; WHO, 2016, and 2019). Climate change is caused by global warming, characterized by increases to near-surface and lower-atmosphere air pressure, sea-surface temperature, and ocean heat content (Bush & Lemmen, 2019). Global warming is caused by greenhouse gas emissions, particularly carbon dioxide, methane, and changes to land use (i.e. clearing of forests to make room for agriculture lands) (Bush & Lemmen, 2019; Foster, 2010; IPCC, 2019; NASA, 2019; UN, 2019; WHO, 2019). Greenhouse gases emissions are produced primarily by human industrial activities (Bush & Lemmen, 2019; Foster, 2010; IPCC, 2019; NASA, 2019; UN, 2019; WHO, 2019). The breakdown of global greenhouse gas emissions (per industrial sector) are as follows: (1) Energy (electricity and heat): 35 percent, (2) agriculture: 24 percent, (3) industry: 21 percent, (4) transportation: 14 percent, and (5) buildings: six percent (WHO, 2019). In Canada, energy and transportation account for the sectors producing the highest amounts of greenhouse gases at 45 percent and 28 percent respectively (Prairie Climate Centre, 2018). See figure 5.1 for a full breakdown of Canadian greenhouse gas emissions. Greenhouse gases caused by human industrial processes are the dominant cause of increases to global climate temperature observed

starting in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century until the present (Bush & Lemmen, 2019; Foster, 2010; IPCC, 2019; NASA, 2019; UN, 2019; WHO, 2019).

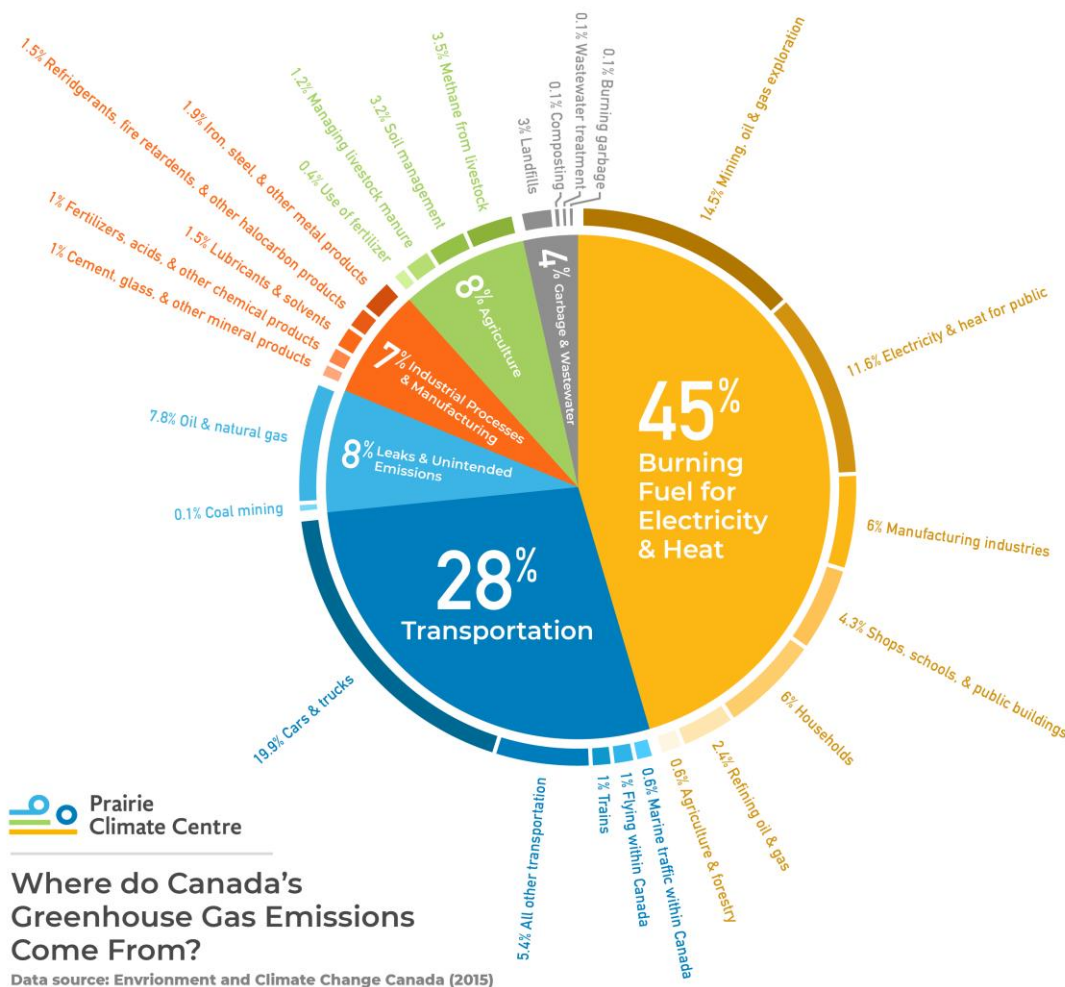


Figure 5.1: Where do Canada's greenhouse gas emissions come from? Prairie Climate Centre, 2018.

The term climate change differs from global warming because it encompasses the *risks* of global warming, including an increased frequency of sudden events (landslides, glacial lake outburst), and extreme weather (hurricanes, cyclones, torrential rains, storm surges, sand and dust storms, heatwaves, wild fire, and cold spells) (Bush & Lemmen, 2019; NASA, 2019; WHO, 2019). Other direct and profound climate risks that threaten ecological balance include: higher temperatures, rainfall variability, reduced river flows, invasive species, oil and coastal degradation, erosion, desertification, ocean acidification, coral bleaching, salt water intrusion,

glacier and permafrost melting, rising sea-levels and changes to seasonal patterns including planet/flower blooming (Bush & Lemmen, 2019; Foster, 2010; IPCC, 2019; NASA, 2019; UN, 2019; WHO, 2019). Changes to seasonal patterns, species distribution, and ocean circulation patterns are also at risk of being negatively affected by climate change and subsequent diseases (Bush & Lemmen, 2019; NASA, 2019; WHO, 2019). Atmospheric warming threatens the well-being of both people and the planet, even if drastic measures to meet carbon targets are met (Bush & Lemmen, 2019; IPCC, 2019). However, the severity of future global climate risk is dependent on climate action taken in the present:

Climate change creates additional stresses on land, exacerbating existing risks to livelihoods, biodiversity, human and ecosystem health, infrastructure, and food systems (*high confidence*)<sup>6</sup>. Increasing impacts on land are projected under all future GHG [greenhouse gas] emission scenarios (*high confidence*). Some regions will face higher risks, while some regions will face risks previously not anticipated (*high confidence*). Cascading risks with impacts on multiple systems and sectors also vary across regions (*high confidence*). (ICPP, 2019, p. 15)

This translates to bombardment of consequences (processes or climate risks i.e. desertification, acidification of oceans etc.) that threaten our way of life across systems including food security, livelihoods, value of land, human health, ecosystem health, infrastructure (IPCC, 2019).

## **Well-being in Jeopardy**

Climate risks interact with each other in complex ways where changes in one process can result in compound impacts on multiple systems (see Figure 5.2). The impacts of climate change are already being experienced and will continue to affect human and other ecological life, as global temperatures continue to rise from the increases of green house gas emissions that have been measured since the last IPCC report in 2016 (IPCC, 2019; UN, 2019). Awareness of

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<sup>6</sup> Each of the IPCC's (2019) findings "...is grounded in an evaluation of underlying evidence and agreement. A level of confidence is expressed using five qualifiers: very low, low, medium, high and very high, and typeset in italics, for example, medium. (p. 1)



climate change is no longer enough. Agriculture is affected by extreme weather, soil erosion, and increases to the frequency and severity of crop disease (Bush & Lemmen, 2019; UN, 2019). Water distribution, availability, and quality impact human health and irrigation for crops contributing to food insecurity (Bush & Lemmen, 2019; UN, 2019; WHO, 2019). Biodiversity is threatened as the timing and duration of growing seasons change; species become extinct, endangered, experience changes to distribution, and invasive species become more prevalent; marine habitats are lost or degraded changing population and distributions of marine life, marine populations and distribution change due to ocean acidification and ocean circulation patterns; coastal ecosystems are changing due to coastal erosion, and increased risk of flooding and inundation due to extreme weather; and forest species experience changes in distribution from increases to forest fires and forests are developed into agricultural lands (Bush & Lemmen, 2019; IPCC, 2019; UN, 2019; WHO, 2019).

As a result, climate risks affect the well-being of citizens due to increases in negative health outcomes such as food insecurity resulting in hunger and malnutrition; water-borne diseases due to water scarcity; vector-borne diseases due to higher temperatures and ecological shifts; mortality, morbidity and injury rates due to extreme weather events; heat stroke and death caused by heatwaves; respiratory diseases from poor air quality; increase in cardiovascular disease (and other non-communicable diseases) linked to rising temperature; and allergies, poisoning, and mental health (IPCC, 2019; WHO, 2019). For example, over 70 000 deaths occurred in Europe as a result of the European heatwave in 2003 (WHO, 2019). Projections of the risk to people and the planet vary by region and different scenarios based on global responses to recommend climate action (Bush & Lemmen, 2019; IPCC, 2019; UN, 2019). Canada is experiencing climate change at twice the rate of other regions around the world (Bush & Lemmen, 2019). The impacts of climate change are already being experienced in the form of

extreme weather, floods, precipitation changes, droughts, rising temperatures and sea levels (Bush & Lemmen, 2019; IPCC, 2019; UN, 2019).

#### A. Risks to humans and ecosystems from changes in land-based processes as a result of climate change

Increases in global mean surface temperature (GMST), relative to pre-industrial levels, affect processes involved in desertification (water scarcity), land degradation (soil erosion, vegetation loss, wildfire, permafrost thaw) and food security (crop yield and food supply instabilities). Changes in these processes drive risks to food systems, livelihoods, infrastructure, the value of land, and human and ecosystem health. Changes in one process (e.g. wildfire or water scarcity) may result in compound risks. Risks are location-specific and differ by region.

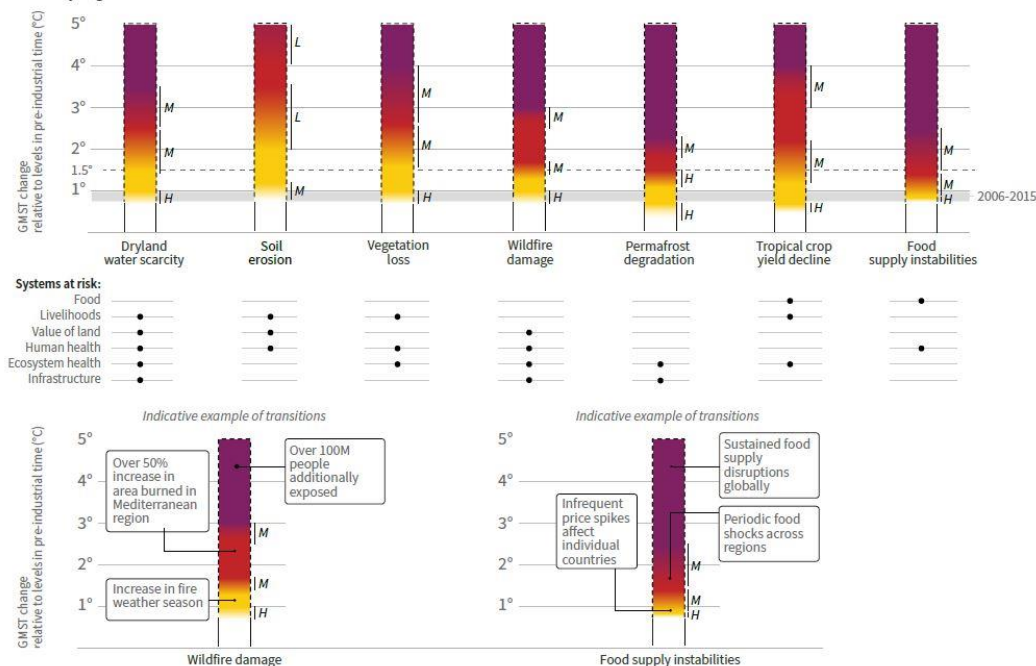


Figure 5.2: Risks and threat level to human and planetary systems from climate change. Multiple systems are impacted from changes in land-based processes. IPCC, 2019.

Those most directly and severely affected by climate risks include people living in countries with weak health infrastructure (mostly in developing countries), with the most vulnerable including children and youth, the elderly, Indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities, those with pre-existing medical conditions and/or disabilities and people working in certain sectors such as farmers, and artisanal fisherfolk (UN, 2019; WHO, 2016, and 2019). Environmental threats become issues of social justice when climate risks threaten the well-being of members of society: particularly the most vulnerable. The most vulnerable people in society must be protected through policy and development because it is morally and ethically just. Vulnerable populations are often geographically positioned in areas that are likely to be affected by extreme

weather events (river deltas, low-lying territories, mountain ranges, drought-prone regions, cities, municipalities, and informal settlements), and lack developed infrastructure (UN, 2019). The

WHO (2019) projects:

The warmest and poorest countries of the world will be most severely affected by climate change, particularly in South Asia...Overall, the health impacts of climate change could force 100 million people into poverty by 2030, with strong impacts on mortality and morbidity...A highly conservative estimate of 250 000 additional deaths each year due to climate change has been projected between 2030 and 2050; of these, 38 000 will result from exposure of the elderly to heat, 48 000 from diarrhoea, 60 000 from malaria and 95 000 from childhood undernutrition. These estimates were calculated within an optimistic scenario in terms of future socioeconomic development and adaptation; furthermore, they cover only four direct effects of climate change on health, while there are many more direct and indirect effects and more complex causal pathways that have not been quantified. Thus, the health of hundreds of millions more people could be affected by climate change. (p. 24)

Recent national research such as the Canadian Climate Report (Bush & Lemmen, 2019) and the Prairie Climate Centre (n.d.) make clear that the *risks* of climate change are understood but the *impacts* are uncertain, and are dependent on high carbon and low carbon emission futures. The next ten years are critical to moving towards low carbon emissions futures setting a direct and immediate timeline for action (IPCC, 2019).

### **The International Federation for Home Economics and Sustainable Development Goals**

Home economics in Saskatchewan need only look to the International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) as a model for current advocacy work, policy development projects, campaigns, that advance the aims of social and ecological justice. IFHE (2019) describes the disciplines of home economics as the original field of research that integrates economic, social, and ecological aspects of everyday living including responsible resource consumption. Home economics recognizes the impact that food, health, economic, environmental, and political systems have on the status of individuals, families, and communities. Home economics focuses on households as the building blocks for sustainable societies and recognizes the

interrelationship between sustainability and human/civil rights with an interest in vulnerable populations (IFHE, 2019, p. 1). IFHE (2019) recognizes that, “...ending poverty and other deprivations is inextricably linked with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth while tackling climate change and working to preserve our nature” (p. 1). Thus, human well-being is inextricably bound to the well-being of the planet. Given the risks to well-being posed by the current climate crisis, humanity must prioritize ensuring the health of our global household, the Earth, first and foremost.

To address the interconnectedness of human well-being and that of the planet, IFHE has produced position statements to guide the attainment of specific Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through home economics research, practice, lobbying, advocacy, and policy development (see Chapter 1 for the full list of SDGs). Having consultative status with the UN, IFHE has released position statements providing: background on each SDG target that relates to home economics, ways the SDG relates to the field and IFHE members, accomplishments and challenges for IFHE members, recommendations for policy makers, and recommendations for home economists. Of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>7</sup> outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development developed by the UN General Assembly in 2015, IFHE takes special interest in six, which impact the status of individuals, families, and communities. The six SDGs include: no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, and responsible consumption and production (IFHE, 2019).

Towards the first SDG of ending poverty, home economics educates around sustainable food production, health, nutrition, sanitation and hygiene, creating awareness about the importance of education for both sexes, alternative forms of income generation, and financial literacy (IFHE, 2019, p. 2). Sustainable financial resource management is addressed through

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<sup>7</sup> See appendix for a full list of the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals

explorations of sharing economies; sustainable water and energy sources and cost reduction; and low-priced, nutritious meals (IFHE, 2019). IFHE report, “Home Economics professionals are educating especially women in sustainable food production and alternative ways of income generation which benefits household food and nutrition security” (IFHE, 2019, p. 3).

Home economics contributes to the second SDG of ending hunger through recognition of the relationship between food production and consumption, and examining how both are affected by consumer choices and behaviours (IFHE, 2019, p. 2). Structural conditions influencing food insecurity such as unequal access to land and other resources are explored as barriers to ending hunger and malnutrition (IFHE, 2019, p. 2). The discipline attempts to improve gender parity as women bear most of the responsibility for procuring and preparing food and gathering related materials such as water and fuel (IFHE, 2019, p. 2). Gender parity is emphasized as home economists lobby to integrate nutrition knowledge, food literacy, food procurement and preparation, food production and consumption, and knowledge around local and sustainable food options in curricula for students of all genders. Home economics promotes that foods-related skills, knowledge, and behaviours are modern, productive, and positive tasks for all genders (IFHE, 2019, p. 3). Furthermore, home economics emphasizes that unpaid labour should be recognized and valued, being that it enhances the well-being of all people (IFHE, 2019, p. 3).

Health problems are social and economic impediments that prevent the attainment of the third SDG for good health and well-being (IFHE, 2019, p. 3). Life expectancy rates, common health issues affecting child and maternal mortality rates, and disease eradication have improved, lending to the progress towards this SDG (IFHE, 2019, p. 3). Home economics recognizes the multi-dimensional barriers to good health and well-being, particularly for vulnerable populations (i.e. rural women) who often lack access to health education, sanitation and hygiene facilities, and are exposed to ambient pollution from households and farming (IFHE, 2019, p. 3). Home

economics research in food security and nutrition, household technology, hygiene, and textiles have a role to play in improving health outcomes for individuals, families, and communities. Research and the practical role of home economics education are essential to improve methods for capacity building, and helping people improve health and avoid infectious diseases through behavioural changes (IFHE, 2019, p. 4). Home economics professionals in institutional settings also seek to address social and psychological health in addition to the physical well-being of household members as an extension of the transdisciplinary nature of the field (IFHE, 2019, p. 4).

Gender equality (SDG five) is viewed in the discipline of home economics as a fundamental human right towards the well-being of individuals, families, and communities (IFHE, 2019). Gender equality is necessary for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world (IFHE, 2019, p. 4). Relationships between family members, division of work, allocation of resources, decision making, and the different roles allocated to women and men are essential to address in order to achieve gender equality (IFHE, 2019, p. 4). Home economics seeks to lessen the workload of domestic labour which is disproportionately carried out by women, and advocate for equal pay for women in jobs where women make less than their male counterparts (IFHE, 2019, p. 4). The discipline strongly advocates that men, other household members, and government structures can support changes in behaviours and values that start at the household level (IFHE, 2019, p. 4). Equal rights are necessary for gender equality and women, “...need full access to and control over land, economic and natural resources, financial services or inheritance” (IFHE, 2019, p. 5). Home economics extension services offer programs that educate households around land and water management to support women’s access to resources, land, and leadership opportunities by helping all family members share responsibility for these crucial resources (IFHE, 2019). Such extension programs will be necessary to help vulnerable

populations adapt to climate risks which threaten both land and water supplies. To reduce violence against women, home economics establishes protection services for women, particularly in rural areas (IFHE, 2019, p. 5). Home economics education can improve well-being by educating both women AND men to care for themselves and others in their households through the management of food, health, and finances, and to use communicative technology to participate in the information age (IFHE, 2019, p. 5).

IFHE seeks to ensure that all people have clean water and sanitation and can offer help to achieve safe and sustainable management of water resources to address SDG six. Home economics recognizes the interplay between water, food and energy: “Water scarcity, poor water quality and inadequate sanitation negatively impact food security, livelihood choices and educational opportunities for poor families across the world” (IFHE, 2019, p. 5). Climate risks threaten safe and sustainable water resources (see Bush & Lemmen, 2019; IPCC, 2019), illuminating the possibilities for home economics to make essential contributions to this SDG. Home economics takes an integrated approach by positioning water management as both a local and a global issue for private and institutional households (IFHE, 2019, p. 5). Foundational home economics themes include hygiene and health which can help prevent disease and malnutrition (IFHE, 2019, p. 5). IFHE advocates for adequate hand washing facilities and toilets with privacy, particularly for women and girls (IFHE, 2019, p. 5). Home economics research disseminates new information on sustainable waste management to communities and through extension programs which aids in avoiding water pollution (IFHE, 2019, p. 5).

Home economics education can and should influence consumer behaviour. For example, it encourages diverting medicine disposal and products with microplastics as well as promoting alternatives to the use of plastic bags (IFHE, 2019, p. 5). Further, home economists advise on the development, and use of water efficient appliances, and advise on sustainable water

consumption appropriate to various locales (i.e. rain water collection) (IFHE, 2019, p. 5). Home economists advocate for regulations to sell misshapen produce, advise cities and municipal governments to recycle food waste, and inform consumers how to prevent food waste as water resources are lost needlessly when they are used for food that is not consumed (IFHE, 2019, p. 6). With historical connections to colleges of agriculture in land grant colleges, there is room for home economists to lobby for ways to reduce food waste at the production stage if it is not a current undertaking.

Integrated water management occurs through home economics when consumers learn about consumer products and production cycles (i.e. the amount of water it takes to make a pair of blue jeans), reflect on reducing their water footprint, and are supported to make informed consumer choices (IFHE, 2019, p. 6). Such knowledge can encourage local participation as water consumers in municipal water and waste management planning (IFHE, 2019, p. 6). Home economics research and education emphasizes establishing renewable energy sources for cooking and reducing the use of wood as a fuel that requires water to grow (IFHE, 2019, p. 6). Home economics training in sustainable farming methods can help protect rivers and groundwater systems from pollution (IFHE, 2019, p. 6).

Lastly, home economics has a role to play in achieving the twelfth SDG, striving to ensure responsible consumption and production patterns. Home economics practice includes consumer education that informs on ethical and sustainable behaviours and consumption patterns towards strengthening responsible consumption for the goods and services people need to live their day to day lives (IFHE, 2019, p. 6). Individual consumption patterns affect household economies and has direct social, economics, and ecological ramifications (IFHE, 2019, p. 6). IFHE (2019) explains how affiliated home economists promote the integration of home economics education across disciplines to spread awareness of the global impacts of consumer



behaviour (p. 6). Mitigating consumption is essential to sustainability approaches to everyday living. New research in home economics is aimed at developing innovations to support sustainable consumerism (IFHE, 2019, p. 7). Specific ways that home economists are working to change the consumer landscape include educating consumers about: reducing waste and sustainable management of resources (energy, water, cooking fuel), buying sustainable and ethically produced goods, and promoting new forms of consumption such as green-building, car sharing, or urban gardening (IFHE, 2019, p. 7). While conscious and sustainable consumerism is important, more is needed to challenge capitalist frameworks that fuel economic and social disparity and ecological destruction.

### **Beyond Conscious Consumerism**

Home economics can help individuals take responsibility for the impacts of their consumer behaviours and choices and consider alternatives. Climate risks directly impact the way that citizens live their day-to-day lives and their quality of life, as much as the way that citizens live their day to day lives also negatively affects the environment and quality of life. For example, only 25 percent of the world's energy is produced by renewable power sources (WHO, 2016). This must be increased to 65 percent by 2050 to meet global emission targets (WHO, 2016). In addition, human food systems account for 37 percent of all green-house gas emissions (IPCC, 2019). On an international scale, home economics is already doing the work of helping people to live sustainably and achieve well-being by contributing to the attainment of six of the UN Sustainable Development goals. However, the IPCC (2019) warns,

The level of risk posed by climate change depends both on the level of warming and on how population, **consumption, production [emphasis added]**, technological

development, and land management patterns evolve (*high confidence*)<sup>8</sup>. Pathways with higher demand for food, feed, and water, **more resource-intensive consumption and production [emphasis added]**, and more limited technological improvements in agriculture yields result in higher risks from water scarcity in drylands, land degradation, and food insecurity (*high confidence*). (p. 17)

This data is important to recognize that citizens affect, and are affected by the behaviours and choices they make through the processes of extraction, production, consumption, and disposal for goods and services they require to live. Thus, many of the SDGs are directly applicable to the field of home economics, and the position statements issued by the IFHE confirm the work that home economists are already doing on an international scale to support sustainable development goals.

Home economics can empower individuals, families, and communities to recognize their influence as consumers to limit consumption to that which is needed versus that which is desired, and to shape modes of production to support ethically and sustainably sourced goods and services. Reliance on companies for the goods and services we need to live our day to day lives has detached most consumers from understandings around how things are made or under what conditions. An emphasis on critical consumer knowledge that demands transparency in production cycles, ensures fair trade practices to protect workers, and valorizes sustainable circular economies over traditional linear models, is necessary to equip consumers with the knowledge to support businesses that meet these standards. Circular economies, "...are based on maximizing the value of the resources in use, the reuse of production and consumption wastes, and transition to the use of renewable energy sources. In comparison with the currently dominant model, the circular economy presupposes a different system of human interaction in the spheres of production and consumption and eradicates waste through careful design"

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<sup>8</sup> Each of the IPCC's (2019) findings "...is grounded in an evaluation of underlying evidence and agreement. A level of confidence is expressed using five qualifiers: very low, low, medium, high and very high, and typeset in italics, for example, medium. (p. 1)

(Didenko, Klochkov, & Skripnuk, 2018, p. 1). In contrast, traditional production models are linear with a definitive end point where a product is destroyed after finishing its life cycle, consequently creating excess waste — one of the main contributors to the depletion of natural resources (Michellini et al, 2017 as cited in Didenko, Klochkov, & Skripnuk, 2018, p. 2).

Home economics can influence *current* modes of production through education, advocacy, and lobbying around ethical and sustainable, circular economics in agriculture, textiles, and construction materials and techniques. Conscious consumerism in support of sustainable agriculture, local food economics, green building, and the production of ethical and fair-trade textiles can help shape future manufacturing practices. While an important part of the solution within the contexts of our current global economics system, conscious consumerism will mitigate climate risks but will not challenge the underlying systems contributing to the climate crisis. Home economics and consumer education must work to help consumers reduce their overall consumption patterns, above conscious consumerism. Reducing, repairing, reusing, and upcycling are preferable to recycling. Gardening, repairing worn clothing and textiles, slow consumption or buying higher quality goods less often, promoting the health and environmental benefits of plant-based diets, living small, and designing and building green homes that use passive solar heating, rammed earth or hay bale walls, renewable energy sources and raw materials are all within the realm of home economics knowledge and skill. These examples can serve as a form of resistance within home economics, offering *alternatives* to dominant modes of production, thereby disrupting the status quo. Developing an awareness of why these alternatives are desirable can motivate citizens to shift their behaviours and attitudes and upend the balance of power. Coupled with a political consciousness and the civic acumen to challenge governments to regulate corporations emphasis on linear economies, home economics has the

potential to empower individuals, families, and communities to challenge the root causes of oppression.

Acknowledging the history of home economics in consumer education, McGregor (2002) warns that “...not challenging capitalism leads to the sanction of relentless consumption, a practice that is not sustainable” (p, 4). Industrial processes fuelled by corporate greed, and relentless consumption practices contributes to increases in climate risks and ultimately human health and well-being. The hidden costs to human and planetary health caused by deregulated markets are exacerbated by unbridled consumption patterns, and are veiled from consumers so as to maintain the status quo. The interrelationship between the attitudes and behaviours, and products consumers choose in their everyday life is not explicitly connected to climate risks, and the health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities. Home economics is unique in that it can deconstruct dominant narratives around the systems of which we are apart and help individuals, families, and communities consider alternatives that contribute to protecting the well-being of the planet and the world’s most vulnerable in the process. Furthermore, a critical social and ecological pedagogy for the teaching of home economics can empower citizens to push back against deregulation of market economies in favour of policy development that protects people and the planet. A critical social and ecological pedagogy for the teaching of home economics has significant and meaningful contributions to make towards climate action by guiding home economists as they help individuals, families, and communities self-actualize their contributions towards social and ecological justice.

### **Canadian Home Economics Teachers Perceptions on Sustainable Development**

Narrowing the focus from IFHE’s position on the UN’s SDGs, home economists on a national scale have also taken up the call to teach towards issues of ecological and social justice.

Exploring the evolution of important historical sustainable development documents from the 1990's as a background for a study aimed at understanding home economics teachers perceptions on sustainable development, Dewhurst and Pendergast (2011) explain how Agenda 21 (a pivotal UNESCO-UNEP report from 1992) reframed discourse on sustainability by linking climate justice to quality of life, standards of living, gender, human rights, social justice, and democracy. Meeting sustainability goals through education is important because it,

...is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of the people to address environment and development issues...It is critical for achieving environmental and ethical awareness, values and attitudes, skills and behaviour consistent with sustainable development and for the effective public participation in decision-making. (UNESCO-UNEP, 1992, p. 2 as cited in Dewhurst & Pendergast, 2011)

Agenda 21 emphasized the importance of sustainability education, and highlighted it as an essential ingredient for change (Dewhurst & Pendergast, 2011).

Dewhurst and Pendergast (2011) surveyed home economics teachers from Australia, Malta, Scotland, and Canada in order to understand, "the intentions, beliefs and practices of home economics teachers with respect to sustainable development education, from a cross-cultural perspective" (p. 5). Dewhurst and Pendergast (2011) affirm that the dataset is non-representative, having employed convenience sampling circulated by peers at home economics functions. 15 of the 186 respondents were Canadian and cannot possibly represent the views of all teachers of home economics teachers (Dewhurst & Pendergast, 2011). However, the study is important because it provides insight as to how social and ecological justice are perceived by *some* home economics teachers, particularly in a Canadian context where home economics research on the subject is minimal. Every Canadian respondent agreed that schools should prepare students to deal with sustainable development issues and that students should learn about it in home economics (Dewhurst & Pendergast, 2011, p. 7-8). Just over 10 percent of Canadian respondents felt that the current school system adequately prepared students for sustainable

development (Dewhurst & Pendergast, 2011, p.7). Canadian home economic teachers felt that teachers and the education system held the greatest responsibility to teach sustainability education, followed by the government, and lastly other sectors including industry, business, and communities (Dewhurst & Pendergast, 2011, p. 12). Notably, home economics teachers felt that the media did *not* bear responsibility for teaching issues of sustainability (Dewhurst & Pendergast, 2011, p. 12).

In this same study, in order to gain perspective on how definitions of sustainability varied across cultures, Dewhurst and Pendergast (2011) asked home economics teachers to define sustainability education and found that many respondents' answers identified at least two dimensions of sustainability. Analysis of respondent answers were sorted into 8 themes or dimensions of sustainability and the frequency with each dimension appeared in respondent answers was recorded (Dewhurst & Pendergast, 2011). Recurrent dimensions of sustainability included: food chain, local perspectives, environmental and global perspectives, quality of life/human considerations, resource utilization and management, consumer choice and actions, ethics, and interdependence (Dewhurst & Pendergast, 2011). Canadian home economics teachers indicated the aforementioned dimensions of sustainability at the following frequency: (1) food chain-10 percent, (2) local perspectives-6 percent, (3) environmental and global perspectives-39 percent, (4) quality of life/human considerations-13 percent, (5) resource utilization and management-13 percent, (6) consumer choice and actions-2 percent, (7) ethics-10 percent, and (8) interdependence-4 percent (Dewhurst & Pendergast, 2011, p. 9-10).

The top five Canadian home economic teaching interests around sustainability in ranked order included health and the environment, cross-curricular projects, eco-friendly products, the environment, and food miles/reducing carbon footprints (Dewhurst & Pendergast, 2011, p. 13). 67 percent of Canadian respondents indicated that they teach sustainability through home

economics occasionally (Dewhurst & Pendergast, 2011, p). The top dimension of sustainability reported to be part of a Canadian home economics teacher's current practice was resource utilization and management (Dewhurst & Pendergast, 2011, p. 11). Two-thirds of Canadian home economics teachers felt confident teaching about sustainable development. (Dewhurst & Pendergast, 2011). One-third of Canadian home economics teachers reported intentions to develop lessons around sustainability, and 80 percent expressed a desire to become more involved with planning and teaching aspects of sustainability (Dewhurst & Pendergast, 2011, p. 8).

Home economics has much to contribute to sustainable development goals but data collected by Dewhurst and Pendergast (2011) reveal that across cultures, home economics teachers perceive that the subject's potential to act as an agent of change is being underutilized and possibly underestimated. Home economics teachers from Australia, Malta, Scotland, and Canada, perceive that the contributions of home economics have been neglected, as evidenced by a lack of home economics research generated in the field (Dewhurst & Pendergast, 2011). The study found that across cultures, home economics teachers think sustainable development is important and that their subject-specific curriculum has significant contributions to make to sustainable development education (Dewhurst & Pendergast, 2011). However, the study noted that practitioners in all four locales view the lack of home economics sustainable development research as an inhibiting factor to schools meeting sustainable development goals (Dewhurst & Pendergast, 2011).

### **The Way Forward**

To establish the social utility of home economics as an agent of social change and sustainability in the present, one must also take into account the socio-political contexts in

Saskatchewan that influence the development of progressive curricula and pedagogy. While climate risks have serious global consequences, not all regions are responding to the threat of climate change with the same sense of urgency. As a province economically reliant on carbon producing industries such as forestry, mining, agriculture, and oil and gas, Saskatchewan residents face an uphill battle as climate justice seems to directly threaten the livelihood of many of its citizens and major industries. In addition, engaging citizens in developed nations in climate change issues presents challenges because the impacts are perceived as uncertain, in the distant future, and not personally relevant (Scannell and Gifford, 2013). The Yale Program on Climate Change Communication in the United States, conducted a survey to understand climate change in the American mind, and found that while 74 percent of women and 70 percent of men believe that climate change will harm future generations, only 48 percent of women and 42 percent of men think it is harming them personally (Ballew, M., Marlon, J., Leiserowitz, A., & Maibach, A., 2018, November 20). Climate change messaging often focuses on populations most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, who are overwhelmingly comprised of marginalized people in developing countries. Focussing on vulnerable populations is both morally and ethically just, as their needs are the most immediate and necessary to address. However, focussing on climate change effects in developing countries may disengage those in developed countries, as the impacts of climate change are seen as a distant threat (Scannell and Gifford, 2013).

Scannell and Gifford (2013) explain that psychological distance is created when people perceive that objects, people, places, and events are too far removed from their direct and immediate experience, which "... may hinder climate change engagement — why bother to change one's habits and lifestyles for a cause that is outside one's daily sphere?" (p. 62). Results of research conducted by Scannell and Gifford (2013) in British Columbia yielded an important



relationship between strong place attachment, gender (women illustrated stronger place attachment and engagement), and local climate change messaging to increase engagement in climate change issues. Engaging citizens in issues of climate action in Saskatchewan must frame climate change messaging in local contexts. Home economics educators, those involved in curricula development, and partners involved in ensuring the longevity of the home economics certificate program at the University of Saskatchewan, must feel that climate change is personally relevant and worthy of addressing through home economics. Furthermore, this is a foundational principle that must be considered to make learning about climate change relevant to students as well as home economics practitioners. These particularities that distinguish home economics in Saskatchewan from home economics elsewhere likely all contribute to the gap between the international focus of the discipline and the way it is both understood, and taught in Saskatchewan. In order to make a case for critical and ecological pedagogy for the teaching of home economics as well as a call for an urgent curricula renewal, establishing why social and ecological justice have become the pathway to home economists helping people to achieve individual, family, and community well-being is an essential endeavour.

Research and projects being undertaken by IFHE shows that sustainability, which can directly and indirectly influence quality of life, has taken priority as the pathway to achieve well-being for individuals, families, and communities. The study by Dewhurst and Pendergast (2011) reveals that some home economists in Canada already link issues of sustainability and quality of life/well-being, that they think that sustainability education is important, and that support is needed to help teachers transform their good intentions into practice. Updated home economics curricula accompanied by a critical social and ecological pedagogy for the teaching of home economics are required to support the desire of teachers to achieve well-being for individuals, families, and communities, through sustainability education.

Current twenty-year old home economics curricula in Saskatchewan reduces the important issues of sustainability to a foundational objective made mention of at the beginning of the curricula documents, with some optional modules based on the three Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle) rooted in economical home management versus contemporary ecological frameworks aimed at lessening consumption patterns. This focus is likely due in part to the fact that the rapid and growing concern of climate impacts were not as prominent a concern during the time when Saskatchewan home economics curricula were last renewed. Scannell and Gifford (2013) assert that "...certain lifestyle choices or specific behaviours (particularly those of individuals living in developed countries) remain carbon intensive and unsustainable, and therefore must be altered if the climate crisis has to be successfully curbed (e.g., Gifford, 2008). Individual engagement in climate change issues can motivate some of these necessary behaviour changes as well as foster the acceptance and longevity of climate-friendly policies." (p. 61). Home economics in Saskatchewan has the potential to directly influence attitudes and behaviours that can empower individuals, families, and communities to engage in climate action that will contribute to a more sustainable future.

In order to work towards achieving sustainability goals, the new home economics curriculum needs to focus on transformative education that is emancipatory and action-oriented to advance the field. To support the profession to fulfill its goals, a critical social and ecological pedagogy of home economics can compliment updated home economics curricula. Peterat (1990) explains,

Teachers' implementation of new materials such as a new curriculum or curriculum materials depends on the clarity of the material, its convergence with teachers' beliefs and needs, and support at the school and district levels. Recent curriculum theory has clearly distinguished curriculum documents (plans) from curriculum in practice [enacted curricula], the latter always being an interpretation and a mediation between the ideal action reflected in curriculum plans, and contextual constraints. This distinguishing from plan from action (theory from practice) has led to the reconceptualization of curriculum

development from teacher development and a more fluid relationship between theory and practice. (p. 64)

To bridge the gap between theory and practice, a new, progressive curricula accompanied by a critical ecological and social pedagogy for the teaching of home economics, will build capacity in practitioners to teach towards the goals of the profession and renew the value of the discipline in contemporary society. For de Zwart (2003), “An ecological view of home economics means moving beyond the old views of standardization and order that have trapped home economics in a stereotyped vision of cooking and sewing with little redeeming value” (p. 202-203). The transdisciplinary orientation of home economics, coupled with the discipline’s capacity to reposition itself as a response to evolving economic, political, and social concerns in pursuit of the well-being for people, and now the planet, is evident throughout the development of the profession. A shift towards sustainability education through home economics is already afoot, and home economics in Saskatchewan has some catching up to do.

## CHAPTER 6

### A CRITICAL PEDAGOGY FOR SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE

#### **Curriculum: Out of the Hands of Home Economists**

Teaching and learning involve the complex and nuanced interplay between curricula and pedagogy, complicated by previous knowledge and current interests of both teacher and student, facilitated by the learning environment and teacher/student relationship. Consequently, there are multiple approaches to the teaching and learning appropriate within home economics. Through developing a theoretical framework for a critical pedagogy of home economics to address issues of social and ecological justice, home economics educators in Saskatchewan can fulfill the fundamental goal of the profession to improve the well-being of individuals, families, and communities through the development of a theoretical framework for a critical pedagogy of home economics.

During this current period of curricula renewal in Saskatchewan, a small group of home economists and industry representatives from technical colleges selected by a Ministry of Education representative and the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation (STF) will select the outcomes in which students must demonstrate competency. Developing curricular outcomes places the very important task of prioritizing *what* knowledge is valuable in the hands of a few individuals. The background knowledge, skills, and interests of individuals selected to participate in curricula development will contribute to determining what home economics knowledge in Saskatchewan is worthy of study. Kumashiro (2015) explains that the prioritization of certain ways of teaching-and-learning (pedagogy) and what is taught (curricula) emphasizes what is valued by the people with decision making power and that, “... teachers and students need to see knowledge, especially the official knowledge of schools, as political and

partial” (p. 9). Knowledge is partial in that it is socially constructed, which is significant because its meaning is developed within cultural contexts and can be understood differently when viewed from multiple perspectives (Kumashiro, 2015). Home economics curricular outcomes are influenced by the perspectives and experiences of those selected to participate in their development and cannot possibly represent the multiplicity of perspectives of all home economists in Saskatchewan. In other words, curriculum development is not an objective enterprise; it is impossible to be so.

The inclusion or exclusion of knowledge is a political act influenced by the motivations of individuals with power and control to determine what is to be learned or what is deemed to be important. Ultimate power and control rests in the hands of the Ministry of Education and the Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation (STF) to select home economists for curricula renewal committees who will align curricula with the values and goals of the governing institution overseeing education in the province. Home economist, Gale Ellen West laments:

...my hopes are dashed by continued strengthening of linkages between businesses/industries and educational systems. Critically-thinking decision makers within family structures are not in the best interest of business. The latter’s focus is on economies of scale in production, with low-paid workers who spend earnings without questioning the moral and ethical outcomes for their family members or for society as a whole. (cited in McGregor, 2015, p. 15)

As discussed previously, current home economics curricula in Saskatchewan primarily consist of lower-order thinking outcomes that promote memorization of facts that can be easily looked up using online reference tools, and focuses on technical skills to prepare students for careers in the trades. Giroux and Giroux (2006) argue that, “Public education is about more than job preparation or even critical consciousness raising; it is also about imagining different futures and politics as a form of intervention in public life” (p. 29). A technical, skills-based curricula is not surprising considering the makeup of individuals deciding on what knowledge has value in relation to home economics curricula.

Members of the Practical and Applied Arts Reference Committee from previous home economics curricula development include consultants from the STF for the Saskatchewan Business Teachers' Association, the Saskatchewan Career/Work Education Association, the Saskatchewan Industrial Education Association, SIAST (Saskatchewan's technical college now referred to as Saskatchewan Polytechnic), and the Saskatchewan Association for Computers in Education. Other members include representatives from the League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents; the College of Education at the Universities of Saskatchewan and Regina, and the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association. One home economist representing SHETA and seconded (teacher) curricula writers are credited on Saskatchewan curricula documents, illustrating minimal representation of home economics specialists with developed knowledge of their subject area. The makeup of previous curricula renewal committees positions home economics as a trade rather than a profession. In addition, home economics is incorporated into the Practical and Applied Arts umbrella, discounting the established theoretical knowledge base of the profession, within academia.

Overall, the makeup of past curricula renewal committees illustrates that there is a glaring absence of home economics representation in home economics curricula renewal processes, which begs the question, who is determining the discipline's foundational objectives, curricular outcomes, and indicators, if not home economists? The likelihood of a dramatic shift in the makeup of current home economics curricula renewal committees is unlikely. In previous chapters, the history of home economics in Saskatchewan reveals that the subject was implemented in academic institutions as a support to lagging agricultural systems and declined, in part, as its relationship to agriculture weakened. As a mechanism to train workers for careers in the trades in the present, home economics is merely serving a new master.

The process of developing a theoretical framework for a critical pedagogy of home economics education necessitates dialogue around the conditions that support or inhibit the development of a curricula that equips students to live in a world where the impacts of climate change, among other dangers, threaten the well-being of individuals, families, and communities. Citizens living in developed nations rely on systems of unregulated capitalism and are marketed a lifestyle of unbridled consumerism in order to acquire the goods and services they need to live, to the detriment of their environment. Marketing manipulates desires to be viewed as needs and individuals as worthy of having their needs/desires fulfilled through consumerism. However, it is essential to consider that as the production of goods and services has been outsourced to corporations, individual skills-based knowledge is often lost. Unless individuals, families, and communities are taught to question the system of which they are part, and provided with the tools to imagine and create alternatives, neoliberal capitalism will continue to wreak havoc on ecosystems that directly effect the well-being of humanity. O’Sullivan (1999) warns that,

...the onward movement of capital-ventured globalization is deeply destructive and is the end point of a cultural synthesis that is increasingly morbid to the carrying capacities of the planet. The crucial task of the educator will be to develop an awareness that sees through the logic of destructive globalization and to combine this with critical skills to resist the rhetoric that now saturates us. (p. 33)

Transformative learning is desirable beyond merely helping individuals’ families and communities cope with a rapidly changing world, but to question the status-quo and consider alternatives.

While control of curricula development remains out of the hands of most of its intended practitioners, pedagogical decisions around *how* to teach curricular content rests in the hands of individuals, simultaneously allowing agency and a form of resistance: “As a referent for engaging fundamental questions about democracy, pedagogy gestures to important questions about the political, institutional, and structural conditions that allow teachers to produce

curricula, collaborate with colleagues, engage in research, and connect their work to broader public issues” (Giroux, 2007, p. 3). Pedagogical decisions are important not only as a way to critique processes of curricula development, but to ask important questions around *why* some home economics knowledge is valued at the expense of others, *who* has the power, *whose* voices are omitted, *what* is to be gained, and *who* benefits by protecting the status quo. Furthermore, it allows opportunities to connect the work of home economics to broad public issues making learning more meaningful to students.

### **Home Economics Pedagogies: A Theoretical Framework**

To make the case for a critical social and ecological justice pedagogy of home economics, it is essential to establish a baseline of current pedagogical understanding in home economics as a theoretical framework. Going beyond ambiguous dictionary definitions of pedagogy described as the art, science, or profession of teaching, Smith (2017a) makes a case for three common perspectives of pedagogy that should be braided together to develop a transformational pedagogy of home economics education. For Smith, transformative learning involves processes leading to major shifts in perspective (Cranton, 2006 as cited in Smith, 2017a). The metaphor of a braid is central to Smith’s (2017a) model of a transformational home economics pedagogical model because it emphasizes that the three pedagogical approaches outlined are not mutually exclusive, with each strand both constraining and enriching the others. Smith (2017a) conceptualizes home economics transformational pedagogy as comprised of: pedagogy as classroom teaching practices, pedagogy as relationship, and pedagogy as a political/moral project.

The most common understanding of pedagogy as classroom teaching practice is as a set of instructional methodologies utilized to answer *how* questions (Smith, 2017a). For example.



the question, “how is a roux<sup>9</sup> made?” could be answered through the use of several instructional methodologies. To explain the ingredients required, and process, a home economics educator might use direct transmission and share the information orally. In addition, the use of a demonstration to provide a visual example for students to follow is another instructional methodology commonly used in foods and sewing courses. How-type answers are necessitated by how-type questions or curricular outcomes that make up most of home economics curricula in Saskatchewan. Instructional methods focus on the “...technical instrumental aspects of teaching, how knowledge is transmitted and how activities can be designed to bring about learning” (Smith, 2017a, p. 11). Technical approaches to home economics curriculum and pedagogy provide families with the skills necessary to cope and meet their day to day needs, although they do not help people understand, adapt, evaluate, and challenge the power dynamics influencing well-being (McGregor et al., 2004, p. 2).

Instructional methodologies focus on *what* teachers do, not *why* they do it (Alexander, 2004 as cited in Smith 2017a). An even deeper level of understanding is when *critical* ‘why’ questions are asked which seek to challenge dominant systems of power and heighten political consciousness. Examples of instructional methods include ice breakers, Venn diagrams, jig-saw activities, demonstrations, and think-pair-share (Smith, 2017a). “Teacher-centered practices include direct instruction, such as lectures and demonstrations and are useful when there is information to be transmitted to students as part of a lesson and time is limited” (Smith, 2017a, p. 11). Pedagogy as classroom teaching practice situates the teacher as the expert who set goals to accomplish and the criteria required to reach them (McGregor et al., 2004, p. 2). However, using real-world case studies, problem-based learning, role playing, simulations, inquiry-based

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<sup>9</sup> A roux is a mixture of equal parts flour and fat that forms a paste which is cooked and used to thicken many different types of sauces and soups.

learning, group projects, collaborative activities, community service, and place-based activities can be utilized within the frameworks of constructivist and critical pedagogies to support transformational learning (Smith, 2017a).

Pedagogy as relationship involves two aspects. One aspect relates directly to the teacher/student relationship and the way that it informs practice (Smith, 2017a). Smith (2017a) outlines her understanding of Nel Noddings four components of caring relationships: *modelling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation*. *Modelling* involves demonstrating to students how to care. (Smith, 2017a). *Dialogue* involves talking with students rather than at them and is consequently more student-centered (Smith, 2017a). It involves a search for common understanding through open-ended conversations that are genuine, empathetic and appreciative of students' contributions (Smith, 2017a). The worth and experience of each student should be affirmed and valued so as to create a space where students feel safe to share their beliefs and ideas (Smith, 2017a). Teachers should model and provide opportunities for students to *practice* care, concern, connection, and nurturing (Smith, 2017a). *Confirmation* is provided by teachers as they affirm and encourage individual behaviours that make up a community of caring. Collegial conversations corroborate the unique opportunity home economics practitioners have to build meaningful relationships with students due in part to class structure. Many home economists agree that frequent lab opportunities with independent work time for students, allow for informal conversations where teachers can get to know their students beyond the classroom (i.e. "stitch and bitch" sewing lab sessions). Teachers should develop a sensitivity towards students' likes, dislikes, and learning styles, and diverse backgrounds (Smith, 2017a). They should exhibit curiosity, passion, a spirit of inquiry, thoughtfulness, humour, model a strong ethical orientation and hope that the obstacles facing humanity are surmountable (Smith, 2017a). When students

are known to a teacher, instructional methods to best facilitate learning can be chosen accordingly.

The other aspect of pedagogy as relationship centers around the socio-cultural conditions that create knowledge revolving around pedagogical choices selected by the teacher. This aspect of pedagogy as relationship is also described as the classroom climate, classroom atmosphere, community of inquiry, or a democratic classroom (Smith, 2017a). Democracy in the classroom is created when learning is a reciprocal process and the voices of all learners are heard. Giroux (2007) explains:

Democracy cannot work if citizens are not autonomous, self-judging and independent — qualities that are indispensable for students if they are going to make vital judgements and choices about participating in and shaping decisions that affect everyday life, institutional reform, and governmental policy. Hence, pedagogy becomes the cornerstone of democracy in that it provides the very foundation for students to learn not merely how to be governed, but also how to be capable of governing. (p. 3)

Smith (2017a) describes aspects of socio-cultural conditions that teachers must strive for including creating a space responsive to diversity of identity, experience and culture that is culturally appropriate and avoids marginalisation (Smith, 2017a). Rather than the teacher being the omnipotent keeper and transmitter of knowledge and the student a receptacle, the teacher is also a learner, and power and decision-making are shared between members of the learning community (Smith, 2017a). Giroux (2005) explains, “...teacher authority rests on pedagogical practices that reject the role of students as passive recipients of familiar knowledge and view them instead as producers of knowledge, who not only critically engage diverse ideas but also transform and act on them” (p. 3). A shift from teacher to facilitator is a powerful modification to normative classroom language: It acknowledges the necessary leadership tasks involved in creating a learning environment, while also inferring a more egalitarian role in guiding conditions so that knowledge is created by the community as a whole.

Smith (2017a) connects the embeddedness of pedagogy of relationship in pedagogy of the political moral project by explaining that, “It is within this dwelling aright with others within the community of the classroom that students learn to live the values of the political/moral project. Pedagogy of relationship opens the classroom to the possibility for transformative learning” (p. 10). Smith’s (2017a) outline required to foster pedagogy of relationship, can be strengthened by the acknowledgement that culturally appropriate ways of being in the classroom and avoiding marginalisation are made possible through processes of developing awareness, analysis, and evaluation encouraged through the use of critical pedagogies. Giroux (2007) posits that:

Teacher authority at its best means taking a stand without standing still. It suggests that as educators we make a sincere effort to be self-reflective about the value-laden nature of our authority while taking on the fundamental task of educating students to take responsibility for the direction of society. (p. 2)

Critical pedagogies encourage facilitators and learners to examine their biases and identify gaps in their personal knowledge and experience based on their social positioning. None the less, pedagogy of relationship is essential to create the conditions that facilitate a community where students are willing to do the challenging but rewarding work required through the use of critical pedagogies.

Pedagogy as political/moral project refers to socio-ideological purposes driving educational practice (Smith, 2017a). Knowledge is not neutral and is highly political (Smith, 2017a). Education is imbued with values shaped by systems of power (race, class, gender, ability, age) (Smith, 2017a). Giroux (2007) draws a connection between how we teach and the wider ramifications of pedagogical choices: “Pedagogy is the space that provides a moral and political referent for understanding how what we do in the classroom is linked to wider social, political, and economic forces” (p. 3). The view of pedagogy as a political/moral component developed with increasing prominence of critical pedagogies. Critical pedagogies are grounded

in the work of Paulo Freire who developed adult literacy programs in impoverished areas of Brazil (Smith, 2017a). Freire's liberatory project focussed on giving voice to the oppressed by utilizing language, concepts, words, and readings to understand the ideological sources of their disempowerment (Smith, 2017a). Freire (2000) explained, "Liberating education consists in acts of cognition, not transferrals of information" (p. 79). Critical pedagogies have built upon Freire's foundations striving to achieve social justice by transforming injustices within social relations and institutions (Smith, 2017a).

In education, critical pedagogies challenge the unquestioned acceptance of the status quo and are premised on the belief that education should ensure human rights and justice for all (Smith, 2017a). Smith (2017a) makes a case that home economics education is action-oriented and is meant to perform a mission of service to society, "...perhaps even more so when you consider the problems that continue to face families, particularly ones arising from powerful forces such as corporate capitalism, war and conflict, and climate change" (p. 9). Specific injustices are addressed through critical pedagogies such as critical feminist pedagogy, anti-racist pedagogy, decolonizing pedagogies, post-colonial pedagogies, queer pedagogies, and eco-pedagogies (Smith, 2017a). Collectively, these specific pedagogies can be described as transformative because they actively promote creating changes to existing realities (Smith, 2017a). All forms of critical literacies involve process of "problem posing, critical consciousness, questioning, critical reflection, and critical social action" (Laster, 2008, p. 10 as cited in Smith, 2017a). Changes do not necessarily mean greater justice, so *critical* social action is needed to pursue emancipation from oppressive colonial, patriarchal, socio-economic structures and practices. Pendergast (2001) views transformative, emancipatory approaches to teaching and learning in home economics as a way to drive the discipline forward beyond the limitations imposed by subject matter devalued by its lack of wage-earning potential.

McGregor et al. (2004) refer to interpretative and emancipatory practices in home economics which have links to Smith's (2017a) concepts of pedagogy as relationship and pedagogy as moral/political project. Interpretative practice is achieved through relationship and communication within and between families and society (McGregor et al., 2004). Conversations center on understanding, adapting, and conforming to rapid changes in society through discussions on values, beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, feelings in order to understand *why* they act (or not) in certain ways (McGregor et al., 2004, p. 2). Emancipatory practice has a focus on the future and the evaluation of current systems and what we *should* be doing to make the world a better place (McGregor et al., 2004). Emancipatory practice, "...is concerned with understanding power dynamics, which are oppressive or limiting and with helping us to take moral, ethical actions for the good all people and the environment" (McGregor et al., 2004, p. 2). As applied through the context of education, McGregor et al. (2004) strengthen the case for a multi-pedagogical approach to the teaching of home economics, satisfied using Smith's (2017a) pedagogical braid model as a foundation.

### **A Step Further**

Smith's (2017a) conceptualization of a transformative pedagogy of home economics explains that transformative learning is desirable to empower people through shifts in perspective, and challenging the status quo. Transformative learning in home economics avoids the "right way" of doing things which disparages the lived experience and knowledge of others, perpetuates stereotypes and prejudices, and contradicts the values and beliefs of home economics (Smith 2017a). Transformative learning is desirable in order to advance the field beyond the all-too-common technical approach to the teaching of the discipline. A tendency to focus on the technical approach to home economics or pedagogy as classroom practice is a critique levelled

from within the field, explored in a collaborative article by home economists practitioners entitled: “A satire: confessions of recovering home economists” (see McGregor et al., 2004). McGregor et al. (2004) assert the ways in which home economics prioritize technical knowledge and uphold the status quo:

From a technical perspective, we [home economists] provide families with the skills to produce or procure physical goods or services required for “the good life” without ever questioning what makes this the good life or the preferred way of life or whether it is sustainable. We tend to do things the way we were taught, the way its always been done, for fear of being fired, because that is what is in the textbook, because that is what we were told to do, or because everyone does it that way. (McGregor et al., 2004, p. 2)

Technical approaches are not bad per se, but are inadequate to develop resilient families as sustainable social institutions and democratic units in society (McGregor et al., 2004, p. 2).

While a technical approach to home economics may have had value at particular points at times in home economics history, and still is an important part of home economics in the present, it has resulted in deeply entrenched beliefs around what constitutes home economics teaching and learning. Pendergast (2001) argues that, “The problem with the historical legacy of home economics origins is that in order to escape this marginality of positioning, we need to open our minds to new ways of thinking about what is valued and what is valuable” (p. 9). de Zwart (2003) narrates:

In a discussion on new ways to ask questions in home economics pedagogy, Rosemary Jones (1992) aimed her discussion squarely at the white middle-class home economics teacher. After studying Marjorie Brown’s writings, she commented: [Brown’s book] put into language many of my own concerns about the triviality of what is being taught under the rubric of home economics, when the problems families face have less to do with ways a pie-crust can be decorated, than with coping with the traumas of living in a rapidly changing society. It makes so much sense to move beyond traditional/conventional/technical ways of going about teaching home economics. (Jones, 1992, pg. 127 as cited in deZwart, 2003, p. 202-203)

Pendergast (2001) explains the futility of focusing on teaching technical skills in a society that is changing at an unprecedented pace: “It is no longer useful to teach a set of skills or processes or

knowledge, because they will become redundant or limited within a short period of time” (p. 7). Therefore, a focus on technical skills is short-sighted in that it may help families cope and survive rapid changes in society in the present, but is not sustainable for inevitable, long-term change. This is true of the skills taught through curricular objectives as well as values we perpetuate by the educator’s chosen pedagogical choice.

Transformational learning in home economics has implications not only to advance the discipline, but also to improve the well-being of students of home economics that make up individuals, families, and communities. Pendergast (2001) sees education as the conduit to amplify the work of home economists to teach people how to live well in the socio-political contexts of the twenty-first century. Education provides home economists with a platform to help large numbers of students to prepare for the changing socio-political conditions in which they live. Damage caused by climate change that threatens the well-being of people and the planet are being exponentially increased by industrialization (see Chapter 5). Industrialization is driven by consumerism which has drastically changed the daily life of individuals and families: “... the removal of the empowered individual and the replacement with a consumer who is dependent on others for providing their basic needs is a pattern that underpins the philosophy of much of the globalisation of products and services in this day and in the future” (Pendergast, 2001, p. 7). Helping individuals, families, and communities develop the technical skills to improve their well-being in capitalist frameworks, coupled with the knowledge and skill to engage as justice-oriented civic participants is a tall order, but one that can help revitalize home economics in Saskatchewan as it works to improve issues of ecological and social injustice.

The works of Smith (2017a), Pendergast (2001), and McGregor et al., (2004), make clear that a critical pedagogy of home economics is needed for home economists because it is necessary in the face of current ecological crises threatening the well-being of humanity.



McGregor (2015) underscores the need to develop resiliency in individuals, families, and communities to counterbalance the immense social, cultural, political, economic, technological, and environmental changes of our time. Home economists must prioritize improving the *human condition*, humanity's present condition based on the totality of actions the human race has taken to date, which powerfully impacts, well-being, quality of life, and basic human needs (McGregor, 2015).

Without presupposing any sort of grand narrative approach, eco-justice, anti-oppressive, and citizenship education offer promise within the larger critical pedagogical tradition, to establish a framework for a critical pedagogy for social and ecological justice in home economics. Kumashiro (2015) offers a tangible framework that can be adapted by home economics educators to structure individualized activities, lessons, and unit plans, while taking into account the diverse interests, backgrounds, and passions of each class and adjusting so as to select instructional methods accordingly. Classroom contexts are highly nuanced and diverse. Kumashiro (2015) offers a model for diverse classrooms that provides the foundation of a critical anti-oppressive approach that should be applied and individualised by each educator. Bowers (2002), Edmundson and Martusewicz (2013) compliment Kumashiro's (2015) framework through their work on eco-justice, while Westheimer (2015) and Westheimer and Kahne (2004) add a civics education perspective.

Taken together, eco-justice and democratic pedagogies invite tangible, action-oriented suggestions to enable a transformational pedagogy of home economics focussed on both disrupting and changing the current trajectory of consumer culture. O'Sullivan (1999) demands that, "In the context of global transformative education, we must learn to be critical of these powerful voices that direct our attention towards a consumer lifestyle that is destructive to our planet. One component of this education is the restoration of a critical commonsense [sic]" (p.

40). Grounded in ways we can transform individual behaviours and attitudes to be more self-reliant and sustainable while simultaneously holding governments and corporations to task through civic engagement and policy development, a social and ecological pedagogy of home economics is congruent with the beliefs, values, and goals of the profession.

### **A Critical Social and Ecological Pedagogy of Home Economics — A Framework**

Kumashiro's (2015) model of anti-oppressive education suggests there are four stages of learning that can be used to guide students towards critical understandings of the social, political, and economic systems that effectively position many people and the planet outside the margins of dominant culture (see figure 6.1). For Kumashiro (2015), knowledge is never static or complete: it evolves and knowledge advances as we examine it from different perspectives (particularly those outside the margins of dominant culture) and time periods. Pendergast (2001) explains that singular narratives do not tell the whole story. Referencing commonly held beliefs amongst home economists around outside perceptions and status of the subject matter, she elucidates, "Our history can never change; however, our understanding of the social contexts of that history can offer an interpretation that is not disempowering and marginalising" (p. 9). Similarly, when viewed from different vantage points (i.e., race, class, gender, ability, age), there are new understandings to be gained as the learning community navigates through both the explicit and implicit curriculum.

Because knowledge is fragmented and evolves through exposure to perspectives that are counternarrative, the anti-oppressive educator is not something an educator *is* (Kumashiro, 2015). Rather, the anti-oppressive educator is an ideal that educators should continuously strive to *become*, although the journey is indefinite (Kumashiro, 2015). Because learning is an on-going process, anti-oppressive educators are facilitators and participants in learning processes,

equalizing the playing field when coupled with the conditions to practice a pedagogy of relationship as described by Smith (2017a). Students are active participants in knowledge creation, and their lived experience, and multi-layered positionality with the strata of society are essential to their individual learning and that of the learning community. Sometimes this means unlearning widely-held knowledge of the dominant culture. Further, personal biases and contradictions are to be sought out and confronted by accepting the varying experiences of others, and normative power structures that create and maintain inequality are problematized. However, students are heavily influenced by the learning facilitator, who must strongly consider the type of student they wish to develop. From a civics education perspective, Westheimer challenges critical educators to evaluate the implications of pedagogical choices (and curricular outcomes) in pursuit of the type of citizens desired.

Curricula and pedagogy that emphasize meritocracy and focus on developing personally responsible citizens (who focus on individual acts like picking up litter, recycling, volunteering etc.), help address immediate needs for marginalized groups. Similarly, participatory citizenship approaches might employ instructional strategies that encourage students to become active members of community organizations and improvement efforts and also teach them strategies for organizing, and how government agencies and processes work (Westheimer, 2015).

Participatory citizens recognize that to improve society, both civic participation and leadership are required to improve things (Westheimer, 2015). These approaches to teaching and learning:

...can obscure the need for collective and often public sector initiatives; second, this emphasis can distract attention from analysis of the causes of social problems, and third, volunteerism and kindness are put forward as ways of avoiding politics and policy. (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 3)

However, both personally responsible and participatory citizenship educational approaches do not emblazon students with the collective social consciousness or civic acumen to challenge the root causes of social and ecological disparity (Westheimer, 2015).

Many individual home economics programs and teachers engage students in service-learning/participatory citizenship projects that provide opportunities to apply skills as a form of civic engagement towards social responsibility (Apple, 2015). However, service learning alone is inadequate as it does not generate systemic change. For example, my clothing classes have taken part in service-learning opportunities including sewing reusable sanitary napkins for young women in Malawi so they do not have to miss school while menstruating, making bibs for a local crisis nursery, and sewing quilts for social workers to share with children in community schools. While these projects are great ways to increase relevance of applied skills and provide much needed services to the community, they meet immediate needs but do not challenge or change underlying systems of oppression. As a teacher, I missed out on valuable opportunities to learn with my class about the systems of colonisation, patriarchy, and neoliberalism that prevent young girls in Malawi from having affordable access to sanitary products, and consequently an education. Service-learning opportunities are an important part of home economics but must be tempered with context and background to consider why projects such as these are needed and to lead to taking political action towards making them redundant.

Westheimer (2015) challenges educators to consider what the implications are of varying pedagogical approaches with respect to the type of citizen that we wish to foster in each student. Participatory citizenship, teaches citizenship through service-learning projects like feeding the hungry etc. However, participatory citizenship does not develop democracy and is consequently apolitical, and often put forward by administrators as a way of avoiding politics and policy (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004). In my school, students are encouraged to recycle, compost, participate in our community garden, and a school-wide garbage clean up in the spring. However, class participation in a peaceful climate rally this fall was cancelled in a decision made by the director of education for the school division, citing student safety concerns in case the

rally turned violent. Classroom conversations with students and other faculty revealed the questions that many people had about the division's underlying motivations, considering the duality of the division's avoidance of a climate change rally in a province reliant on fossil fuels, while simultaneously encouraging apolitical acts like picking up garbage.

Service learning has a place in home economics; however, projects must extend beyond the application of skills or technical knowledge. Programs that link justice-oriented citizenship and develop the will and capacity for civic participation are laudable (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004). However, participatory citizenship or service learning does not address the root causes of injustice: "The emphasis placed on individual character and behaviour, for example, can obscure the need for collective and often public sector initiatives" (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004, p. 3). Educators are often limited by contextual factors such as the structure of the curriculum, the values and priorities of those designing and implementing it, instruction time, and community and administrative politics (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004, p. 6). Giroux and Giroux (2006) assert that:

Critical pedagogy is a reminder that the educational conditions that make democratic identities, values, and politics possible and effective have to be fought for more urgently, at a time when the public sphere, public goods, public spaces, and democracy are under attack by market and other ideological fundamentalists who either believe that corporations in top competitive form can solve all human affliction or that dissent is comparable to aiding terrorists — positions that share the common denominator of disabling a substantive notion of ethics, politics, and democracy. (p. 30-31)

Service learning must include critical pedagogies that encourage action and structural change. A critical social and ecological justice pedagogy of home economics is a pathway to ensure the well-being of individuals, families and communities.

In contrast, Westheimer's (2015) model of social justice-oriented citizens is worthy of further examination as a part of a critical social and ecological justice pedagogy desirable in the home economics classroom. Social justice-oriented citizens can critically assess social, political,

and economic structures, and act to solve root causes of inequality and oppression (Westheimer, 2015; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Social justice-oriented citizens have the skills necessary to participate as effective informed citizens, value diverse perspectives, and seek to transform established systems and structures to eliminate disparity (Westheimer, 2015). Thus, Westheimer (2015) compels educators to consider the immense potential to generate change if students build off of the transformational awakening offered by Kumashiro (2015) through the development of an active and engaged citizenry.

Eco-justice adds to the anti-oppressive framework by focusing on the relational interdependence of living creatures, other entities and ecosystems (Edmundson & Martusewicz, 2013). Eco-justice exposes violence resulting from human-centrism and mechanization and is guided by the ethical ideal, “What is to be conserved?” (Edmundson & Martusewicz, 2013). Bowers (2002) makes a distinction between eco-justice pedagogy and other critical pedagogies by examining how critical theorists reproduce, “The assumption that equates change with progress, which is held by most Western thinkers as well as by elites in other cultures who have been educated in Western universities, [that] leads to viewing the loss of intergenerational knowledge and networks of mutual aid as a necessary part of becoming modern” (p. 5). Bowers (2002) offers a reflexive analysis of other critical pedagogies by challenging the notion that emancipation is linear, predicated on abandoning land-based knowledges, traditions, and relationships in the process of bringing about change.

Eco-justice pedagogies center around relationships, community, connection and caring between people and nature (Bowers, 2002; Edmundson and Martusewicz, 2013). Bowers (2002) notes intergenerational knowledge as a key element in considering the future and ways in which the non-commoditized activities of community can help individuals, families, and communities to develop resiliency and independence from market-based systems that harm people and the

planet (Bowers, 2002; Edmundson and Martusewicz, 2013). Gardening (particularly with native plants that require less resources to grow), companion planting, hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering or foraging, eating seasonally, preserving, and using food as medicine are examples of inter-generational land-based foods knowledge that has valuable applications in a home economics classroom. On a trip to South East Asia, I was lucky enough to visit several H'mong villages in the mountainous northern region of Vietnam, where I learned about the production and adornment of fabric used for each distinctive village's regalia. The process included spinning of hemp fibers into thread, weaving of threads into fabric, hand dyeing of fabric with indigo, the sewing of garments and bags with a foot pedalled sewing machine, and batik adornment using wax prior to dyeing, or embroidery following the dyeing process. While this example is not local, growing diversity in classrooms in Saskatchewan allow opportunities to connect with student's families and invite them into the classroom to share similar knowledge and skill. Edmundson and Martusewicz, (2013) add that alternative forms of land-based knowledge remain unacknowledged by other critical pedagogies despite offering wisdom to establish ecologically sustainable ways of living.

The infusion of eco-justice pedagogy into a critical social and ecological home economics pedagogy provides a pathway for home economists to challenge a history borne out of the "right/proper" way to do things. A focus on eco-justice offers opportunities for reconciliation within the discipline of home economics having been used as a colonial tool of assimilation on the Canadian Prairies. Bowers (2002) explains,

Learning about (and thus valorizing) the non-commoditized traditions of ethnic minorities should also be part of an eco-justice curriculum. Many of these cultural groups have survived economically and politically repressive environments because of their ability to carry forward the intergenerational knowledge that enabled them to be less dependent upon the consumerism that more privileged groups took for granted. (p. 11)

Ancient intergenerational knowledge must be protected because it maintains, “...specific necessary limits and relationships that keep living systems flourishing” (Edmundson and Martusewicz, 2013, p. 7). Confronting the colonial roots of many home economics practices and skills rooted in European traditions and emphasizing other ways of being, knowing, and living well, are an essential pathway for home economics to begin to right the wrongs of the past and help individuals, families, and communities live more sustainably at the same time.

## **Crisis**

Kumashiro’s (2015) model of anti-oppressive education (see figure 6.1) begins with the crisis stage, called such because it is meant to problematize and create discord between normative behaviours, assumptions, and understandings of the world (shaped by the dominant systems of power, i.e., social, economic, political, ecological) and the experience of individuals, groups, and the Earth’s ecosystems that are affected negatively by them. The teacher’s role is to confront students with an issue wrought with contradictory knowledge that challenges their own experiences and perceptions, by illuminating a problem posed from alternate perspectives beyond normative culture (Kumashiro, 2015). Learners should come to see that equitable solutions are the responsibility of the collective of humanity — those with privilege and power and power should use it for the greater good.

The onus is on teachers to be knowledgeable enough to bring forth a problematic issue that unsettles normative assumptions and values. From an eco-justice perspective, that means exploring the way that daily consumer culture promotes individualism, and establishing understanding that the well-being of humanity rests on our symbiotic relationship with the planet (Bowers, 2002). Recognizing the interconnectedness of all life on the planet, eco-justice pedagogy attempts to understand the relationships between households, communities and the





For example, a teacher might confront students with the inherent contradictions embedded within a consumer construct such as fast fashion—a topic wrought with social and ecological justice-oriented problems. Fast fashion refers to low-cost clothing items mimicking luxury brand trends, that rush production cycles from a typical four-season fashion model to a fashion cycle that pushes new styles into stores like Zara and H & M every three weeks (Joy et al., 2012). The benefits of fast fashion are that chic, trendy clothing items are available at a lower cost, making it possible for people to update their wardrobes frequently. However, the drawbacks extend beyond reduced durability and quality: the true cost of fast fashion is paid by for by workers and the environment. Workers producing clothing are exploited through their labour in factories located in developing countries without regulations that protect them from unsafe conditions, long hours, low wages, and exposure to toxic chemicals — social and ecological issues. Factories are often structurally unsound: “Since 2005, at least 1800 garment workers have been killed in factory fires and building collapses in Bangladesh alone according to research by the advocacy group International Labor Rights Forum [2] and the problem affects many other countries where cheap clothes are manufactured” (Hobson, 2013).

From an ecological perspective, fast fashion is problematic because it is meant to be disposable, lasting a mere ten washes before losing the ability to maintain the garments original quality — admitted as a marketing strategy by fast fashion businesses themselves (Joy et al., 2012). Fast fashion is producing such a high quantity of waste that a powerplant in Sweden is burning H&M clothing instead of coal (Starn, 2017). With all of the dyes and synthetic, polymer fibers used in textile production, research is needed to determine if this switch is truly a sustainable alternative to coal. While it could be a solution for the problem of how to eliminate excess waste, it could also be putting more harmful emissions into the atmosphere than the burning of coal, and polymers into the oceans.

The purpose of presenting students with contradictory knowledge that challenges normative assumptions that are all too often taken for granted, is to help students recognize that their knowledge is partial and fragmented (Kumashiro, 2015). While students may appreciate being able to buy trendy clothes at discount prices, developing an awareness of the harm done to the planet and to people, forces students to re-evaluate their possible support of a popular consumer trend where corporations reap the benefits. “Fast fashion chains typically earn higher profit margins — on average, a sizeable 16 percent — than their traditional fashion retail counterparts, who average only 7 percent” (Sull and Turconi 2008 as cited in Joy et al., 2012). In the crisis stage, students contrast their prior knowledge and understandings with new knowledge developed by considering the issue through multiple lenses (i.e. from a sustainability perspective or from the vantage point of a worker in a developing country without adequate worker’s rights). It is likely that some students will feel resistance to accepting a perspective outside their own experience. It is possible that students could feel anger or guilt at their unwitting participation in the fast fashion system that is harmful to people and the planet.

Kumashiro (2015) asserts, that resistance is a natural part of the process and that our biases are to be confronted head on. Teachers and students should use resistance to deepen emergent knowledge by identifying what is to be gained by protecting previous, fragmented understandings: “The reason we fail to do more to challenge oppression is not merely that we do not know enough about oppression, but also that we often do not want to know more about oppression” (Kumashiro, 2015, p. 27). By lifting the veil on production processes that are hidden from consumers, students are faced with an impending sense of ethical responsibility when considering how their actions (previously taken for granted), affect others. The goal of the crisis stage is to motivate and impassion students about the issue so that teachers can facilitate the next step in Kumashiro’s (2015) anti-oppressive model. The paradox of how new knowledge

problematizes previous knowledge should shift towards conversations about what matters in society (and questioning how it shapes identity, relationships, and actions), and why it matters (and how it reinforces or challenges dominant systems of power) (Kumashiro, 2015, p. 32).

## **Uncertainty**

In the stage of uncertainty, Kumashiro (2015) urges teachers to continuously evaluate both the explicit curriculum and the implicit curriculum. Kumashiro (2015) describes that, “What students learn depends significantly on the unique lenses they use to make sense of their experiences” (p. 39). Engagement occurs for many students when they see themselves or their experiences represented in what they are learning as part of the *intended* curriculum (Kumashiro, 2015). Eco-justice pedagogy emphasizes various ways of knowing and learning. Particularly, an eco-justice pedagogy values knowledge often overlooked by other critical pedagogies and cautions that:

What needs to be avoided is exposure to a curriculum that denigrates their [students’] heritage of intergenerational knowledge — which may include elder knowledge, patterns of mutual aid and solidarity that link together extended families and community networks, ceremonies, narratives, and other traditions essential to their self-identity and moral codes. (Bowers, 2002, p. 12)

Honoring intergenerational knowledge and the unique background of students is a practice that teachers can bring to their classroom with intention by inviting community members to share with students, as well as by selecting curricular materials and activities where students can see themselves reflected in processes of learning.

A colleague in a kindergarten classroom reads a book to his class each school year entitled, *And Tango Makes Three*, a book about two male penguins who create a family with an egg they are given (see Digneau, 2015). The book is used to meet a curricular objective focused on learning about families. The teacher uses the book as one of many, to teach students about all

of the different types of families. He also uses it to engage and provide representation for students he knows who have parents and other family and friends in queer relationships, as well as normalizing it for the entire class. Choosing curricular materials that reflect our knowledge of students and their diverse identities, interests, and experiences (especially those whose intersection of race, class, gender, and ability are typically underrepresented in mainstream media) also implicitly says something about what teacher's value.

In one of the clothing classes I taught, an Indigenous student who was expecting, wanted to learn to make a traditional Cree moss bag to swaddle her baby. The class was very small, and the other students were also excited to make moss bags for their family members or to save for themselves one day. With the help of my school community coordinator, we hosted an elder who shared the teachings and the technical skills for students to make moss bags of their own. In home economics, it is possible to take smaller projects such as the moss bag and broaden the scope of its relevance to examine larger issues of colonization. In the future, I would support this activity by examining the ways that residential school prevented the practicing of Indigenous kinship ties and prevented Indigenous families from practicing the use of the *tikinigan* (crib boards) and moss bags (see Landry, 2018). Reclaiming valuable cultural knowledge and teachings are political act of defiance that disrupt the colonial project. Through Smith's (2017a) pedagogy of relationship, teachers can facilitate a classroom community that demonstrates their commitment to knowing, respecting, and demonstrating the inherent worth and value of each student, as they see themselves reflected in the curriculum. Furthermore, it models these values to students whose identity exists within dominant social strata.

Kumashiro (2015) urges teachers to be vigilant in considering the other hidden messages embedded within the implicit curriculum in schools that are reinforced through our school's structures and teaching practices. For example, our school division's canteens sell highly

processed, low nutrition-based foods such as taco-in-a-bag, poutine, and candy. The canteen owner hangs a banner advertising the nutrition positive choices when few, if any of the guidelines of the Nutrition Positive Manual<sup>10</sup> (2015) are being met. In contrast, countries like Finland and Japan offer national school lunch programs that ensure students eat healthy food and that no one is left hungry, regardless of socioeconomic background (see Murayama et al., 2016; Pellikka, Manninen et al., 2019). In my travels as part of a Japanese exchange, rotating groups of students helped to serve and wash dishes after meals in all four of the different high schools I visited in Kitahiroshima, Takaoka, and Hitachi. The sensei who was hosting me on one of my home stays explained that this practice is meant to teach responsibility, humility, and gratefulness leading to a greater respect for such necessary work. Are we reflecting the values and curricular outcomes we teach in life transitions, health, physical education, and home economics classes by allowing the canteen owner to sell food that doesn't meet provincial standards, using single service cutlery, plates, and napkins that are disposed of after each use?

Similarly, grade 12 graduation banquet at the school where I currently teach was not being widely attended by Muslim families. As a home economics teacher, students brought to my attention that the meal served at the banquet did not provide halal options despite their wide availability and numerous caterers knowledgeable of halal (permissible) and haram (forbidden) foods. When brought to the attention of the event coordinators, students were advised to pay full price for a banquet ticket and not eat the meat — no vegetarian or halal options would be provided. One could not help but questions the message being sent to Muslim students in this important day of celebration for families. Thankfully, school administration lobbied for inclusion by challenging the convention center to accommodate for halal dietary considerations;

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<sup>10</sup> The Nutrition Positive Manual is developed by CHEP Good Food and a committee including Saskatoon Public, Catholic, Prairie Spirit, and Horizon school divisions and the Saskatoon Health Region. Its purpose is to guide healthy food policies and support healthy food environments in the schools of Saskatoon and surrounding areas.

a must for a catering business with an increase in local access and availability of halal foods and products also accessed by my school home economics program.

My relationship with my students and the classroom climate created a space where students felt safe sharing their experience with me. Having been turned away with an unsatisfactory answer, my students were afraid to push the issue further. Pedagogy of relationship and a democratic classroom with teacher as learner should underscore the stage of uncertainty to create safe spaces. Contradictions in school structure and teaching practices are often brought to light through students who have valuable insight when relational conditions make them feel as though the power of the teacher will not be wielded against them for pointing out discord in educational values, and institutional actions. A safe learning environment facilitates and nurtures opportunities to learn together as teachers take a lead on examining the explicit and implicit practices emphasized through school structures and practices *with* students.

Examining biases within our own teaching practices and the very foundations of home economics is another important way that teachers can use to model the personal processes we want to see students apply in the uncertainty stage. For example, de Zwart's (2003) dissertation is a re-examination of the history home economics. de Zwart (2003) works to reconcile some of the contradictions within a discipline wrought with moral imperatives, delivered through the narrow perspective of mostly white, middle-class women. In Saskatchewan industrial schools, domestic training was used to assimilate Indigenous girls by training them in European-based cooking traditions negating land-based knowledge and traditional food practices, and dooming them to lives of domestic servitude through household training at the expense of other academic studies (ChiefCalf, 2002, p. 73). de Zwart (2003) confirms the use of manuals in British Columbia as a colonial tool, predicated on best practice, and the "right" way to do things from a Eurocentric perspective. At the University of Saskatchewan, white instructors from the Indian

Homemaking Program (in the Extension Division from 1967-1972), did not engage in their work with a singular motivation to colonize and assimilate Indigenous women in Saskatchewan (Stahl, 2002). Rather they were what Stahl (2002) describes as benevolent colonizers who were well meaning:

What complicates the role of the benevolent colonizer is that it is enacted by individuals who genuinely believed in the importance of their task. The instructors wanted to show Indian women a better life and a better way to live and this was the basis for their colonization -- however inherently judgmental this might appear. (p. 103)

Home economists at the time would likely have railed against the suggestion that their approach to the discipline was to help individuals, families, and communities achieve well-being for *some*. A critical eye applied to the very foundations of a teacher's own discipline is necessary: "We may speak of a new Home Economics, but we can erase the past only with great difficulty. At the same time, we must change home economics if we wish to continue as a unique, responsive subject area (de Zwart, 2003, p. 202). de Zwart's work challenges home economists to confront biases that are deeply embedded within the discipline and influence current home economics practice and understanding.

Developing an awareness of the language used to give voice to knowledge and experience is essential as the sub-text of words can hold as much meaning, if not more than the words themselves denote. The subtleties of language choice hold explicit meaning, and implicit meaning as the subtext of underlying messages can hold immense weight. Eco-justice pedagogies deconstruct language to understand how value hierarchies of dominion and exploitation are naturalized through language that is often taken for granted (Edmundson and Martusewicz, 2013, p. 8). Home economics, known as the art of "right living" based on a book of the same name by founder Ellen Swallow Richards (1904), denotes that there are both right and wrong ways of living. Realizing contradictions within the traditions of the disciplines and institutions that have shaped our own knowledge and understandings, is a way we can dismantle



dominant systems of power and do the work necessary to counteract harmful practices, and be more open in the face of resistance when challenged with perspectives beyond our own experience.

Largely introspective and critical of both implicit and explicit classroom and school practices, Kumashiro's stage of uncertainty is an extension of the process of unsettling student understandings advocated for by Westheimer (2015). As norms and practices are scrutinized, both teacher and student engage in a process of reevaluating previously held knowledge and perceptions of experiences. Missing from models by Westheimer (2015) and Kumashiro's (2015) models is an examination of privilege. Kumashiro's model seems more teacher focused although I have illustrated the ways in which students can contribute by recognizing contradictions between values and actions in the many widely accepted norms. I argue that as part of the uncertainty stage, teachers should model, articulate, and challenge students to explore the intersections of their privilege and the ways in which varying dominant groups benefit from maintaining the status quo. Both teacher and student should be challenged to understand their own oppression, and their privilege as part of unsettling student understandings and a continuation of challenging personal biases in the crisis stage. While this work can be difficult and uncomfortable, it is necessary in order to develop motivation and passion to continue the work required of the healing stage. Through the sharing of vulnerability and resistance to the status quo, trust between teacher and student are strengthened, preparing both for the next stage in Kumashiro's (2015) model.

## **Healing**

In the healing stage, students embrace conflicting knowledge and develop depth to their understanding of the problem (Kumashiro, 2015). Healing is achieved by building context

behind the issue introduced in the crisis stage. Background emerges through an examination of events, and developing an understanding of the socio-cultural context of place (Kumashiro, 2015). Learning in the healing stage centers around trying to understand the contradictions in the issue to be studied. Lively discussions ensue as four key questions are posed to help identify hierarchies of power (Kumashiro, 2015). It is essential to identify hierarchies of power as a means to addressing social and ecological disparity. Giroux and Giroux (2006) explain that,

...critical pedagogy is defined largely through a set of basic assumptions, which holds that knowledge, power, values, and institutions must be made available to critical scrutiny, be understood as a product of human labor (as opposed to God-given), and evaluated in terms of how they might open up or close down democratic practices and experiences. (p. 27)

Questions that help students understand the social, economic, and political forces shaping their lives must be posed, such as: Who has the power? Who benefits? What are the hidden costs? And whose voices are omitted, silenced? Knowledge in the healing stage should not be presented as neutral (Kumashiro, 2015). Knowledge is political and should be examined as such in order to continuously identify blind spots (Kumashiro, 2015).

In my Foods 30 class, I introduce the topic of the water crisis facing Indigenous Communities in Canada (the crisis stage), by learning about Canadian water activist, Autumn Pelletier from Wikwemikong First Nation on Manitoulin Island in northern Ontario. We hear Pelletier's motivation and experience through her address to world leaders at the United Nations. In the healing stage, the focus of learning shifts to questioning why the issue is a problem, and what is preventing it from being solved. To provide context, we also watch a documentary about Shoal Lake First Nation, whose reserve became inaccessible by land when the city of Winnipeg diverted an aqueduct to provide drinking water for the citizens in the city (see Global News, 2015). The water on reserve became polluted and much of the band's finances were spent on providing potable water to residents (Global News, 2015). Settler students are generally shocked

and appalled that people living in Canada, in the province next to Saskatchewan, are having to fight for this basic human right. Many settler students begin to accept the contradiction of their experience of the Canadian government versus the experience of Indigenous people. It opens up conversations around colonization and the prioritizing of urban settler environments at the expense of Indigenous people and their land. Class discussion center and what how to raise more awareness of the issues and the policy changes that are needed to bring clean drinking water to Indigenous communities in Canada. Through group discussions and small group break out discussions, students consider the systemic social, economic, and political oppression at play. Students easily identify that the government has the power, settler society benefits, the hidden costs are borne by Indigenous communities who are kept out of sight and out of mind in segregated communities, and that Indigenous voices and their allies are silenced or ignored as it is not a mainstream topic at the forefront of the Canadian consciousness. Many students are able to articulate and connect their understandings of colonization and Canada's contentious history with Indigenous people as they thread past and present to identify how this relationship evolved and how it negatively impacts Indigenous people in the present.

Deconstructing power structures necessitate examinations of history, connected with the present in order to develop context. For Westheimer (2015), building context distinguishes critical thought. He explains,

Students are being asked to learn to read but not to consider what's worth reading. They are being asked to become proficient in adding numbers, but not at thinking what the answers add up to—how they connect to the society in which they live. In short, students are acquiring bits of knowledge but are not being taught the social, economic, and political relevance of that knowledge. (p. 29)

Understanding the historical contexts and bridging to present issues of social, economic, political and ecological disparity, allows students to reconcile why the issue matters (Kumashiro, 2015; Westheimer, 2015). Past and present should be woven together, and understood as dynamic

when connected to the present as frames of social reference shift, in order to make history relevant to students (Westheimer, 2015). By understanding the socio-political contexts of disparity, students can be motivated to generate change (Westheimer, 2015).

Through the lens of an eco-justice pedagogy, the healing stage can be enriched through the development of a future-thinking mentality that seeks to transform awareness into action by emphasizing a collective social responsibility for those that will inherit the issues of the present (Bowers, 2002). Bowers (2002) argues that sense of responsibility towards the collective of humanity is necessary because caring and connection to others and the planet are needed to disrupt, "... a subjectively centered individualism required by the consumer, technologically dependent society" (p. 3). Self-limitation and a collective consciousness are required to ensure the well-being of individuals, families, and communities in the future through the reconnection with non-commoditized activities and skills that will provide resilience, and independence (Bower, 2002). It is important that a moral/ethical collective consciousness is developed in students to normalize attitudes and behaviours that benefit the whole of humanity.

In addition to addressing the theoretical aspects of social and ecological justice, the healing stage in a critical social and ecological pedagogy of home economics allows practical opportunities to change attitudes and behaviours that can lessen the ecological burden on the planet through eco-justice pedagogy. For example, to support Indigenous water rights, students might be encouraged to use a water bottle rather than supporting companies like the Nestlé corporation, who extract millions of litres of water from the Six Nations of the Grand River Indigenous reserve in Ontario while its residents have no drinking water (Shimo, 2018). Bowers (2002) supports the development of skills and behaviours that allow people to operate outside dominant modes of production and services because:

There is also a need to use the educational process to regenerate the non-commoditized skills, knowledge, and relationships that enables individuals, families, and communities

to be more self-reliant — and thus to have a smaller ecological impact...a way of reaching a better balance between self-sufficiency and consumerism. (p. 11-12)

Home economics skills that offer alternatives to dominant modes of production include mending clothes and other textiles, repurposing old furniture, reducing food waste (i.e. making stock from scrap vegetables, buying misshapen fruits and vegetables), making beeswax wraps for food storage, urban and indoor gardening, and learning how to cook nutritious and economical meals. Bowers (2002) emphasizes the importance of helping students expand relationships and provide opportunities to develop a student's personal talents to enrich their communities (p. 13). Such activities provide opportunities for students to develop communities of like-minded people, and connect with others as knowledge, skill, and the fruits of their labour are shared. These beloved "skills" of sewing and cooking have a valuable place within the context of larger foundational learning to help individuals and their families lessen their ecological footprint and teach others how to do so (Edmundson & Martusewicz, 2013).

While many of these skills and behaviours are political in that they are acts of resistance against dominant modes of production, it is important that students recognize that these individual changes are not enough to affect meaningful, systemic change. Westheimer (2015) would consider such skills and practices as actions taken by personally responsible citizens, and as such, are included in the healing stage of Kumashiro's (2015) anti-oppressive model. Westheimer (2015) stresses that social justice-oriented citizens challenge the root causes of oppression through civic engagement and participation. The stages of crisis, uncertainty, and healing are all necessary to help students develop a political consciousness and the desire to challenge and change systems of oppression. Learning should be ongoing and transition beyond the healing stage to activism where students can be equipped to navigate political processes, and engage as civic participants in the political arena, in order to challenge and change the roots causes of injustice and inequality.

## Activism

After developing a deeper context to the issue being studied, teacher and students must work to confront problems created by dominant discourses, examine the consequences, and make changes to existing power structures towards the elimination of social and ecological disparity. Kumashiro's (2015) model guides the learning community to direct passion developed through previous stages of learning into challenging institutions and personal practices. Edmundson and Martusewicz (2013) explain that students need to develop the capacity to act, comprised of skills that enable sustainable living through local economies and the places to apply them (p. 11). Kumashiro places equal importance on all four stages of anti-oppressive education; however, many critical educators emphasize the activism stage because it is where change is manifested:

...critical pedagogy is more than simply holding authority accountable through the close-reading of texts, the creation of radical classroom practices, or the promotion of critical literacy. It is also about linking learning to social change, education to democracy, and knowledge to acts of intervention in public life. Critical pedagogy encourages students to learn to register dissent, as well as learning to take risks in creating the conditions for forms of individual and social agency that are conducive to a substantive democracy. (Giroux and Giroux, 2006, p. 28)

The activism stage is action-oriented in that learners are encouraged to participate in civil society by helping to develop, and change laws and policies to challenge dominant systems of power (Kumashiro, 2015). Beyond important awareness raising activities such as attending protests and lobbying legislators, learners should be encouraged to organize community and school groups for political action (Kumashiro, 2015). Organizing for social action is important as students begin to recognize themselves as politically active citizens who can further social and political discourse and influence others in the process.

The activism stage is essential to developing social justice-oriented citizens. Participating as active citizens not only requires in-depth historical understandings of oppressive social and ecological structures. Active citizenship requires the development of students who

understand how politics work and the ways that they can participate. Without the activism stage to motivate and mobilize students towards generating change, educators are missing out on ways to:

teach students to think about root causes of problems or challenge existing social, economic, and political norms as a way to strengthen democracy. When we deny students the opportunity to consider paths for change that involve a critical examination of collective social policy questions (and not just individual character), we betray an important principle of democratic governance: the need for citizens to be able to engage in informed critique and make collective choices. (Westheimer, 2015, p. 45)

The overall goal for the activism stage is to guide a shift in learners from passive recipients of the consequences brought about by dominant practices, to gaining autonomy through resistance to the status quo, and the political acumen to change it.

In my Foods 30 class, I have continued to facilitate students writing letters as a way to empower them as engaged citizens. Students choose a current food issue of interest to them, identify a problem posed by maintaining the status quo, research the topic in detail, formulate a call to action, and write a letter to the head of a company, or a political representative asking for a change in the food systems. In many cases, students also offer possible solutions, adaptations, or examples of innovative solutions that are working in other contexts. Food waste has been a particularly popular topic, prompting many students to write to city counsellors, the mayor of Saskatoon, and even their Member of Parliament asking for regulations in varying aspects of food waste including agricultural production stage loss, and corporate food waste around best before dates. Citing laws passed in France that prohibit restaurants from throwing out food to reduce food insecurity and carbon emissions produced by food waste, to the American good Samaritan food act that absolves donors of liability in attempt to encourage food donations to those in need, to demanding the federal government to provide clean drinking water for all Indigenous communities in Canada, students are excited to get replies that tell us about legislative bills that are in development, or updates on their issues of interest that they are

following in the news. Students recognize that one letter is not going to prove an instantaneous solution. Rather, it's a starting off point in a continued dialogue that needs to be accompanied by raising awareness, voting, making individual choices that align their consumer choices with their values, and holding governments and corporations accountable for their actions.

Through Kumashiro's four stages of anti-oppressive education, informed by eco-justice pedagogies through the work of Bowers (2002) and Edmundson and Martusewicz (2013) and Westheimer's (2015) citizenship education model, a critical social and ecological justice pedagogy of home economics has been established. The suggested pedagogy is congruent with Smith's (2017a) home economics pedagogical braid model and satisfies her criteria that a home economics pedagogy addresses critical classroom teaching practices, relationships, and the political/moral project embedded in the pursuit of improving the well-being of individuals, families, and communities.



## CONCLUSION

A critical social and ecological approach to the teaching of home economics can provide the discipline with something that is unique to the profession giving it value for its own merit beyond the ability to play a supporting role to industry and other disciplines. A critical social and ecological pedagogy for the teaching of home economics has the potential to improve the well-being of individuals, families, and communities by teaching them sustainable attitudes and behaviours, while giving them agency through the development of the knowledge and skills to build a less oppressive future as engaged citizens. While a majority of home economics teachers in Saskatchewan do not have autonomy over the curricula or *what* they teach (although they *should*), they have agency in *how* they teach, and a critical pedagogical approach to the teaching of home economics offers opportunities to disrupt the status quo through our practice, and the development of students as active and engaged citizens.

Home economists in Saskatchewan have a unique opportunity to influence the trajectory of the discipline and the way it is taught in schools. Despite the fact that home economics teacher preparatory programs are in decline around the globe, home economics classes remain part of provincial curricula across Canada, even expanding to add middle years home economics curricula in Manitoba (Manitoba Association of Home Economists, 2019; Smith & de Zwart, 2010). With current and continuing updates to Saskatchewan home economics curricula, home economists must seize the opportunity to influence the impact that we wish our students to have on their local and global communities in relation to the environment. The history of home economics illustrates that the discipline has always been unique in respect to other academic disciplines of study because it is dynamic, and continuously adapting to evolving societal needs.

## **Recommendations**

Home economics curricula should be based on current research in the discipline being done provincially, nationally, and internationally. Without professional accreditation and an academic program, home economics in the province is disconnected from keeping up with current trends in the field. Without a means to engage in research in a university setting where research is highly prized, home economics is likely to be treated as a trade. I recognize that my research situates home economics in a hierarchy between home economics as a professionalized discipline of study versus home economics as part of the skills/trades. I offer that skills-based activities, and career explorations have a place in home economics. However, the move to shift home economics towards the skills/trades dismisses the years of scholarship and research that form the theoretical underpinnings of an established discipline of study within post-secondary institutions. The integration of practical, skills-based learning and the body of home economics theoretical knowledge is what make home economics unique. Decisions to undermine the foundations of home economics and delegate it to technical colleges have more to do with neoliberalism. Home economics as skills/trades detaches home economics from the wider theoretical underpinnings that form the foundations of the discipline. A focus on home economics as skills/trades positions the discipline to funnel students into the trades, distancing home economics from its goal to improve well-being for individuals, families, and communities.

The College of Education's website, explains the certificate program is a partnership between the College of Education and Saskatchewan skills and trades, signifying another step in the de-professionalization of the discipline in the province. Home economics curricula are also in processes of renewal. The degree to which home economics curricula are being rethought, restructured, and reoriented to issues of social and ecological justice is uncertain. Outside of a handful of home economics teachers scattered across the province pursuing Master of Education

Degrees in Home Economics through the University of British Columbia, the number of home economics teachers in Saskatchewan accessing current research in the field is unknown. An absence of local opportunities to further education in the stream of home economics likely contributes to the disconnect between current trends in home economics and the way that it is taught in Saskatchewan schools.

Revitalizing the home economics certificate program at the University of Saskatchewan requires that home economists and their professional organizations lobby to have a voice at the table where decisions are made about home economics programming. An online graduate program should also be considered as a way to reconnect practicing home economists in the province with current research and professional development opportunities, as well as attracting prospective students from surrounding provinces. Producing research is an essential element in reinforcing home economics as an independent academic discipline worthy of study. Home economics requires persistent advocacy to promote the development of programs, curricula, and pedagogy that further the interests and goals of the discipline. Curriculum development committees should include more home economics voices at the table: one or two home economists cannot possibly represent all home economists. A more inclusive, democratic, and transparent process is required. Home economics curricula development committees could replace representatives from the trades with voices from academic disciplines related to home economics. For example, foods curricula could include home economists as well as specialists from other academic disciplines including agriculture, nursing, and dietetics. This might serve to reinforce home economics as a profession rather than a trade, while renewing connections to disciplines that have lost touch with historical connections to home economics. Home economists deserve a voice in decisions *about* and *for* home economics. ASHE and SHETA have a responsibility to make sure that voice is heard.

Traditional ego-centric models (globally and locally) of home economics that place individuals in the center of familial, community, and environmental relationships must be reworked, in favor of eco-centric models from which all other relationships are made possible. Home economists must widen their scope of relationship and consider that the relationships between individual, family, and community and the environment must be reordered, prioritizing the environment to ensure the longevity and well-being of humanity's global home. A critical social and ecological pedagogy for home economics can have an immense social and ecological impact as education is a strategic and effective way to influence societal attitudes and behaviours en masse. Home economics in Canada and in other Western nations is trending towards supporting individuals, families, and communities in the move from risk to resilience, with respect to addressing current climate crises and sustainable living. Home economics in Saskatchewan is at a pivotal juncture to make a meaningful impact on improving the well-being of individuals, families, and communities through the implementation of a theoretical framework for a critical social and ecological pedagogy of home economics. Responsiveness, flexibility, and adaptation to address the most current and pressing issues impacting the well-being of individuals, families, and communities will increase the relevancy of home economics.

Home economics in Saskatchewan could benefit by focusing more on public relations. This could include community outreach programs to illustrate that home economics knowledge is important for *all* people, not just youth in the school system. Reminding people about the value of home economics and garnering support is a source of leverage that could be essential in amplifying the message of home economists to administrators in the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan and the Ministry of Education. Other provinces with professional home economics designations offer programming and direct support to citizens in addition to their colleagues within the field (see Ontario Home Economics Association, 2018). Providing

community classes for members of the public improves good will and strengthens public support. Without new home economics teachers to support, SHETA could shift its gaze to community work. Suzanne Piscopo, a home economist teaching at the University of Malta, explained at the 2017 Canadian Conference of Home Economics held in Vancouver that community outreach is an essential practice that garners public support. By extending the reach of home economics outside the school system, members of the public in Malta recognize the value of home economics and believe that it provides important and necessary services. Public perception can influence policy. Smith and de Zwart (2010) report that fierce advocacy and a surge of public support were instrumental in keeping home economics programming alive at UBC. The importance of home economics must be understood and directly experienced outside of the school system to reinforce the ways that the discipline can improve the well-being of individuals, families, and communities. Public support is a valuable and currently overlooked tool that can help fulfill the goals of the profession while providing home economists with leverage to support the good work they do.

## **Next Steps**

The easiest access point to teacher development is through post-secondary education. Ideally, home economics post-secondary programming would be the pathway to educating future home economics teachers employing critical social and ecological pedagogies using modelling in the hopes that teacher candidates employ similar teaching strategies. Home economics teacher candidates also provide a conduit from the university to practitioners of home economics. My personal experience as a cooperating teacher with five teacher candidates has been positive in that I am directly put in touch with fresh, new ideas that inspire me and reignite my passion for teaching and learning. Without an operational post-secondary home economics teacher training

program, this connection to current trends in home economics are lost on practicing home economists. Similar to the loss College of Home Economics and the current home economics teacher certificate program which is underutilized, many of the recommendations that have been put forth are outside of the control of individual home economists in Saskatchewan. What individual home economists *can* control is their level of knowledge and understanding of how the discipline developed in Saskatchewan and how home economics here compares with other locales.

Home economists also should have contextual knowledge of their locale and community relationships, and control over the ways in which they deliver prescribed curricula. To that end, the development of curricula that supports the application of a critical social and ecological pedagogy is necessary to help home economics teachers imagine how to extend theoretical knowledge into their practice of helping students meet curricular outcomes. Higher order thinking outcomes that ask students to analyze, evaluate, and create are especially needed to support and provide more opportunities to employ a critical social and ecological pedagogy of home economics. The development of resources that support home economists around local climate change issues and connections to local experts to help understand the issues will help make the theoretical more tangible. Understanding the ways in which technical home economics knowledge can be explicitly used to support climate action in the classroom (composting, sewing recycle projects, making bees wax wraps etc.) can be used lead students to understand *why* these skills are important beyond merely understanding *how* to execute them. Technical, skill-based home economics knowledge can be used as a starting to point that leads to asking *critical* why questions around how to challenge and change the root causes of the climate crises and social injustice.

Providing examples of projects that can be used to help students participate as active citizens and lobby for changes in the policies that shape their reality are essential to achieving the important last step of transformational learning. Home economics must be wary of focusing on service learning (serving at a food bank, sewing scent towels for babies in the neonatal care units etc.) as a pathway to change. As Westheimer (2015) cautions, service learning helps with difficulties faced in the present but does nothing to address the root causes of social and ecological injustice. Transformational learning is change making. New home economics curricula designed to explicitly guide teachers and students towards critical social and ecological justice-oriented outcomes is necessary to support improving the well-being of individuals, families, and communities.

In the present, the climate crisis threatens the well-being of individuals, families, and communities throughout the entire world. The coronavirus has also seriously impeded economic systems and delivery, offering an opportunity for members of society to re-evaluate the socio-political systems that govern their lives. The relevance and importance of domestic skills and self-sufficiency have been brought to the forefront of the public consciousness as the global corporate structure is struggling to provide the goods and services we need to live. With interruptions to shipping and mail services and social distancing measures encouraging non-essential workers to stay home, consumers are reconsidering what they deem to be essential goods and services. While the consequences of this global pandemic are tragic, there are opportunities to make structural changes that support sustainable and equitable futures. Addressing issues of social and ecological justice are necessary to aid vulnerable populations both around the world, and in our own country and province. Ecological justice both impacts the well-being of vulnerable populations through safety and availability of food, shelter, and clothing as well as having major influence over health outcomes.

Home economics has much to contribute the climate crises through shifts in attitudes and behaviours in the ways that people live their daily lives. Smith (in McGregor et. al, 2013)

explains:

Everyday life is the place to start to create new or alternative ways of thinking and acting, of producing and consuming, all of which lead to a preferable future. It is the place from which to critique the dominant, alienating, and exploitive ideas and practices that are having an impact on the welfare and fair treatment of individuals, families, and the world we call home. (p. 10)

Developing skills (i.e. cooking, sewing, and design) that foster self-reliance and an ability to lessen participation in systems that rely on modes of production that harm people and the planet can empower individuals, families, and communities. A critical social and ecological pedagogy of home economics can equip individuals, families, and communities with the tools necessary to engage as part of an active and informed citizenry to hold governments and corporations accountable for decisions that jeopardize ecological and social well-being.

A critical social and ecological justice pedagogy of home economics rooted in anti-oppressive, citizenship, and eco-justice models offers promise to help home economics in Saskatchewan align to the broader goals of the discipline. Kumashiro's (2015) model of anti-oppressive education provides the structure and theoretical foundation for a critical social and ecological justice pedagogy of home economics. Westheimer's (2015) socially responsible, participatory, and social justice-oriented citizenship models provide an undercurrent for this work that allows educators to consider the types of students they wish to create, and the types of learning that will facilitate and impact structural change. Edmundson and Martusewicz (2013) and Bowers (2002) provide an eco-justice lens through which home economics can work to dismantle personal harmful attitudes, behaviours, and structural and institutional oppression. A critical social and ecological justice pedagogy of home economics rooted in anti-oppressive, citizenship, and eco-justice models is congruent with the theoretical framework of Smith's



(2017a) home economics pedagogical braid model making space for pedagogy as classroom teaching practices, pedagogy as relationship, and pedagogy as a political/moral project. In particular, developing a political consciousness, learning how to participate as engaged social justice-oriented citizens through advocacy, policy development, and voting processes can help home economics to widen its scope of impact to solve the root problems of social and ecological injustice and improve the well-being of individuals, families, communities *and* the environment in the present and the future.

## APPENDIX

### Sustainable Development Goals



*Appendix 1: Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations Development Programme (2015, September)*

United Nations Development Programme (2015, September). *Sustainable development goals.*

Retrieved from:

<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/corporate/sustainable-development-goals-booklet.html>

United Nations (n.d.). *Sustainable development goals.* Retrieved from:

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